The Secret of Ashton Manor House

BY

ELIZA KERR.

ILLUSTRATED

Bridge Road

Wesleyan Sunday School,

Gainsborough.

FEBRUARY, 1885.

Awarded to

Martha Hargraves

For GOOD ATTENDANCE during the year 1884.

W. FLETCHER,
Superintendent.

FRED HANNAM,
School Secretary.

JNO. W. BROCKSOM,
General Secretary.

"They had seated themselves on a fallen tree trunk, which lay just beside a great oak."—Page 97.

THE SECRET

OF

ASHTON MANOR HOUSE.

BY

ELIZA KERR.

WESLEYAN METHODIST SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,
2, Ludgate Circus Bldgs., E.C.; 2, Castle Street, City Road, E.C.

1884.

Bemrose & Sons,
Printers,
23, Old Bailey, London, E.C.;
and Derby.

"The way of transgressors is hard.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. *Page*

ONE NIGHT. 1

CHAPTER II.

MISS MACNAB. 5

CHAPTER III.

SOAP. 13

CHAPTER IV.

MARJORIE'S TEMPTATION. 25

CHAPTER V.

A SOCIAL GATHERING. 36

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MANOR HOUSE. 48

CHAPTER VII.

MISS MACNAB ON CLASS-MEETING. 59

CHAPTER VIII.

EVIL SEED SOWN. 71

CHAPTER IX. *Page*

CONCERNING MANY THINGS. 83

CHAPTER X.

JOHN WESTON'S PROPOSAL. 95

CHAPTER XI.

MARJORIE'S CONFESSION. 108

CHAPTER XII.

"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES." 120

CHAPTER XIII.

MISS LOUISA'S ENMITY MADE KNOWN. . . . 132

CHAPTER XIV.

MARJORIE'S STORY. 144

CHAPTER XV.

THE END OF THE MYSTERY. 156

THE SECRET
OF
ASHTON MANOR HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

ONE NIGHT.

IT was a wild, cold night. The wind caught up the dry dead leaves and whirled them round the house, and along the deserted garden walks; the tall fir trees swayed their branches about like arms waving valedictory salutations; the dahlias and hollyhocks had given in at last, and bent forlornly over the garden beds, brown, bare, and shorn of all their splendour. The leaden sky hung low over the woodland, and over the little town of Market Hawley; and round the distant mountain ranges lay swathes of cold grey mist.

Within the pleasant, comfortable, old-fashioned Manor House the lights had been extinguished by the sleepy servants an hour ago, all save the tall wax candles on the dining-room table; they and the big fire burning in the wide grate illuminated the long, low apartment, and cast ruddy, fitful shadows on the oaken furniture. Standing near that blazing fire was a woman, small, thin, and wrinkled-faced. Her sharp, loud voice was giving utterance to vindictive, scornful words, as her wrathful glance fell upon a young girl sitting with bowed head on the other side of the hearth. As the torrent of angry words flowed faster and faster, so the girl's head drooped lower and lower, until the hard eyes watching her could no longer witness the effect produced by those harsh, cruel speeches.

By-and-by the girl rose up and quitted the room, never looking back once, nor halting when she was bidden to return. She ascended the wide, thickly-carpeted steps that led to the sleeping rooms above, and entered one of them, where a child three years old slumbered peacefully in a small white cot. She stooped

down and kissed the little one softly; hesitated a moment; then raised her up and dressed her in warm garments, as if preparing for a journey. Then she placed her, still sleeping, upon the outside of the bed, while she gathered up various articles of clothing and crushed them into a bag. Finally, she wrapped herself in a long fur cloak and, taking the child on one arm, and the bag on the other, slowly descended the stairs. She met no one on the way, for the servants were all sleeping soundly, according to the manner of those who engage in physical labour, and the woman whose sharp, loud voice had filled the dining room an hour previously heard no footstep through the silent house: had no presentiment of coming ill as she sat by the dying fire.

Three miles away upon the dark road, a slight, solitary figure sat down by the wayside to rest. She was not weeping, neither was she weary; but over her aspect there was a something desolate, which might have spoken to the heart of a passer-by had human eyes been there to see her young forlornness. But no sound of step broke the stillness of the

night; the road unrolled itself dimly before her view, empty of all things except the narrow shadow of the hedge, which stretched out gloomily—a long strip of darkness through which her way ran.

The rain was beginning to fall now, slowly and steadily. The woman in the dining room of the Manor House drew back the curtains for one moment, and looked out on the dreary dark night, and shivered as she looked; while the tall fir trees swayed their branches about like arms waving valedictory salutations.

CHAPTER II.

MISS MACNAB.

IN the main street of Market Hawley, in a little two-storied house, dwelt Miss Macnab, a moderately well-to-do spinster past middle age. She called herself an "old maid," and she had a beautiful black Persian cat and a large black Newfoundland dog as companions. She was such a cheerful, active, good-hearted little woman, that many of the townsfolk loved her well, although she could scold vigorously and say severe, cutting things whenever she detected meanness, or dishonesty, or backbiting among her neighbours.

She had built the house in which she dwelt; it was two stories lower than any other in the street, and was as unlike those pretentious mansions as the saucy little daisy is unlike the proud, conceited hollyhock. The great

man of the town, Absalom Marsh, "soap and candle-maker to the Queen," declared it spoiled the symmetry of the main street, for all the houses were four stories high except itself, and, as he lived in the main street, he wished Miss Macnab to "improve her abode" by adding the necessary two stories. She declined to do so, giving as a reason for her refusal that she saw no particular beauty in a row of houses like peas in a pod. So the pretty, assertive, snug little house remained two stories high only, and it was said in Market Hawley that house and mistress were much alike in many respects.

On a certain cold November evening, Miss Macnab sat in her comfortable parlour awaiting a visitor. On the table a bounteous meal was spread, and in the grate a bright fire was burning, which was duly appreciated by Lion, the Newfoundland dog, and by Tiger, the dignified Persian cat. Presently the parlour door was opened and the maid announced Miss Mowbray, the expected visitor. Miss Macnab jumped up with alacrity, and held out her hand with a welcoming smile to the tall young woman who entered.

"I am very glad to see you, Miss Marjorie, my dear," she said, in her rapid, energetic fashion. "I have been waiting for you, and so have Lion and Tiger"; she introduced her pets with a wave of her hand.

"I am sorry I have delayed your tea," answered the new-comer, in a low, soft voice, as she smilingly glanced at Lion, who had risen to his feet to inspect her more carefully.

"Oh! well, you haven't injured us very seriously. That will do, Lion; you need not be too curious, for this young lady and I are going to be friends, so you will have many opportunities of seeing her."

Lion walked back to his seat by the fire, and his mistress drew Marjorie Mowbray to the table.

"I am glad you intend to be my friend, Miss Macnab. I did not expect to meet with such a luxury in Market Hawley."

"And why not, my dear? You are not of a melancholy disposition, I trust. Ah! I see you are tired; Mrs. Newton's noisy youngsters were too much for you this afternoon."

"Perhaps I am somewhat tired, but I ought to be accustomed to teaching now, I have

done it for so many years. I don't think I am naturally inclined to melancholy," she added with a smile; "but I believe a true friend to be a luxury."

"Well, it is a nice thing to have, and it is not always to be got; so in that sense it is a luxury. Not that *I* am a nice thing to have by any means. I am sharp and prickly, and very strong in my dislikes; and I am also—an old maid. There, are you disgusted and repelled? You see the cat and the dog, the typical old maid's companions, and you see me, the aforesaid old maid. Are you inclined to have us all three for your friends? I liked you when I saw you in Chapel on Sunday, and I knew you had no acquaintances in the town; for Mrs. Newton told me you had come here in answer to her and Mrs. West's advertisement for a visiting governess."

"I shall be heartily glad to have you for my friends," was the earnest, sincere reply.

Marjorie Mowbray was fair to look upon in a serene, graceful way, and her dark hair and dark eyes were beautiful; but, notwithstanding the bright smile that came and went, her face was sometimes a very sad one. Miss

Macnab looked at her keenly once or twice, and then she asked abruptly:

"Are you all alone in the world, my dear?"

"I have one sister, much younger than myself; we two are alone in the world. She is studying in London to be a painter. She has great talent, and her masters tell her that she will one day be famous, but in the meantime she must work hard. She is only seventeen. I have been mother and father to her since her babyhood; so the more money I can earn, the happier we both are."

"Then she does not teach?"

"Oh! no. She requires all her time for her work. She lodges in South Kensington, London, and attends classes there. When I saw the advertisement in the *Standard* for a visiting governess for two families in a country town, I determined I would try and obtain it. The salary offered was so much more than I was receiving in London, and I thought I could live more cheaply in a country town. That is why I left London, and why I am alone. Of course Nettie will come and see me during her vacations."

"I understand," said Miss Macnab, nodding

her head quickly; "but I can't *quite* understand why Miss Nettie should not earn something also. She is not a child."

"No, she is not a child, but it is my duty to support her. I owe it to her, and she shall never work for her living until she has painted her great picture. Then she will be so rich that she can support us both, I suppose."

The elder woman did not pursue the subject farther, for she saw that it disquieted her visitor.

"Well, then, the best thing I can do for you at present, in my capacity of friend, is to obtain more teaching for you in the town. I daresay my friendly enemy, Absalom Marsh, could assist me."

"Thank you," said Marjorie, with a quick, grateful smile. "I think I shall do very well if I have no more than my two tuitions. May I ask who Absalom Marsh is?"

"Certainly. Mr. Absalom Marsh is 'soap and candle-maker to the Queen,' editor of a paper called *Cleanliness*, and the greatest and most religious man in the town. What are you smiling at, my dear? I assure you I state facts. He certainly is the richest man

in Market Hawley, and he says he is the most religious after our minister."

"What a strange thing for a man to assert," said Marjorie, in some wonder and amusement.

"I can, perhaps, tell you why he considers himself such a religious man. Cleanliness is next to godliness; he edits a paper all about soap, that great cleanser of dirt; he thinks about soap continually and tries to improve the quality of that which he makes and sells; he affirms that it is stated in the Bible that cleanliness is next to godliness; therefore, as he is the great exponent of cleanliness, and Mr. Welsh, the minister, the great exponent of godliness, he is the most religious man in the town, after the minister."

"But I don't believe that statement is in the Bible."

"No, my dear, and many others are *sure* it is not there; but that doesn't trouble Mr. Absalom Marsh in the least. He says it must have been there, but modern translators took it out. To do him justice, he is a kind-hearted man, and a good one too; but he is peculiar, and he is dogmatic. He has a nice

wife, and a conceited, ignorant daughter. Ah! that latter sounds uncharitable, doesn't it? Why, here comes the great man himself! I know his knock well; it is great and important like himself."

"Mr. Marsh, ma'am," announced the maid.

CHAPTER III.

SOAP.

"GOOD evening, Miss Macnab. I would not intrude upon this domestic scene, so to speak, but I was told by your next-door neighbour that her lodger, Miss Mowbray was taking tea with you; and, as I wanted particularly to see that young lady, I thought I would call on you, even at such an unseasonable time."

"Pray, don't apologise, Mr. Marsh. Allow me to introduce you to Miss Mowbray."

After the introduction had been duly performed, Mr. Absalom Marsh seated himself on a chair close to Marjorie, and looked at her gravely.

"I am a business man, Miss Mowbray, so to speak; and I always come to the point at once. No beating about the bush for me

I offend people sometimes by my abrupt speech, and by my articles in *Cleanliness;* but I survive all that. In fact, I may say I am above the wagging of petty tongues. You haven't seen my paper called *Cleanliness*. No, of course not. You are only a new-comer yet. But you will see it, and hear of it too. I am soap-maker to the Queen, and I never forget the important part soap plays in this world of ours. Indeed, it is the chief object of my life to impress other people with the importance of soap. But for it where would we be to-day? Look at the difference between the French and English nations. There you have an illustration—a sad one too—of that which I endeavour to teach weekly in the pages of *Cleanliness*. The French people are shifting, unstable in politics, undignified in their Houses of Parliament. Why, in this enlightened nineteenth century they would think nothing of having a free fight in their debating chambers when differences of opinion arise. Such a spectacle for onlooking nations, so to speak! An epidemic is feared by the people with a craven fear, which tends to make the nation of a timorous, cowardly

disposition ; for once fear enters the heart of man it is impossible to eradicate it. Why is all this? France scarcely recognizes soap as an article of merchandise. If English people go to Paris hotels, they bring their soap with them, which in itself is a significant fact. Now, if a man has used his bath and his soap freely in the morning, he has a sense of well-being ; he need not shrink from his neighbour's eyes, for is he not clean, and shining, and goodly to behold? Thus he grows *dignified* and calm, and will not think of knocking down his political opponent. Then, again, if the people use soap freely on their persons and on their dwellings, they cannot fear an epidemic, for cleanliness is a foe to all diseases of that nature. Thus *fear* would cease to exist amongst the French."

"But, Mr. Marsh," interrupted Miss Macnab, "though the French people may be undignified, surely they are brave?"

"Words, mere words," said the manufacturer, contemptuously. "One good Englishman could beat three Frenchmen, for all their bombast. And why, again, I ask, is there such a difference between the nations?

Englishmen recognize soap; Englishwomen use soap for all household purposes. Yes, even the silver of the social board, and the brass candlestick that holds the taper which illumines our path to our downy couches, are brightened up by the aid of that soap which is found to exceed in excellence any plate powder ever invented. Ah! my dear Miss Mowbray, cleanliness is next to godliness. Godliness comes first, of course, and then, next to it, is cleanliness. Let a man be godly first of all, and then *clean*, and he need fear no foe."

"You said you had a special object in visiting me this evening," said Miss Macnab, suggestively, when Mr. Absalom Marsh paused for a moment in his speech to take a copy of *Cleanliness* from his pocket.

"Yes, yes; I am coming to that. I always go directly to the point, as you know. Now, here is a number of *Cleanliness*, Miss Mowbray. You will see by it more clearly what I am trying to do for Market Hawley, and what I have done for it. At the other end of the town I built a school-house eight years ago, for the education of the children

of my hands, and for any children of the townsfolk who might wish to attend. I charge a nominal fee quarterly, and I had a very good teacher until a month ago, when I sent her away. Mark me, she was not incompetent; we had no misunderstanding, and I found her another situation where the salary was even better than she received from me. Then, why did I dismiss her, you naturally ask. Because I *am* determined that my school shall have a teacher who is a graduate of London University. I visited London recently, and I was gratified by all I saw and heard there. I resolved that Market Hawley should not be behindhand in cultivation. I resolved that the young generation should have an opportunity of making their mark in the world. I said that Euclid, and Algebra, and Political Economy, and such deep subjects should be made familiar to them in their youth. They had only been taught reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and geography; but now we must plunge into the depths, so to speak, and bring up those deeper subjects with which a London University woman would be acquainted. You have come from

London; you have been for years teaching in London. Of course you are a London University graduate; therefore you are the very person I am seeking. Will you accept the post? I am in a hurry to reopen the school, for there has been a month's unavoidable holiday. I will give you a large salary and, as the hours are from nine to one, you will be able to make some arrangement with Mrs. Newton and Mrs. West, so as to retain their work also. Indeed, I have already spoken to them on the subject, and they are anxious to oblige me, and to keep you also."

Now, Marjorie had never said she was a graduate of London University. She had taught for many years in London, and had very good letters of recommendation, in which there was mention made of excellent French and German, of wonderful proficiency in music, vocal and instrumental, but not one word of a London University degree. Mr. Absalom Marsh had taken it for granted that she had a degree because she taught in London. It was his fixed opinion that all young women graduated in London, so he spoke of her to Mrs. Newton as a graduate,

and that good mother had little idea of the meaning of the term, for she was even more ignorant concerning the subject than the soap manufacturer himself. She did not contradict him; she thought Marjorie must have made known her attainments to him, so decidedly did he speak. And thus it happened that the townsfolk had decided that Miss Mowbray was a graduate of London University, before Marjorie heard a word of the matter. Naturally, she was rather startled and amazed at Mr. Absalom Marsh's offer.

"Now then, Miss Mowbray, what do you say? If the salary is not large enough, I will increase, ay, double it even, in order to obtain your services. I know one must pay a high price for a good article; eh, Miss Macnab?"

"Yes, indeed," returned that little woman, wondering much at Marjorie's hesitation. Why, this was the very thing for her. Here would be an increase to her salary which would make her almost rich. She might retain one tuition and the school, and then she would not be overworked, and yet have a large income. Had she forgotten her sister, that she hesitated so?

"May I give my decisive answer to-morrow, instead of to-night?" asked Marjorie, clasping her hands tightly together, a look of uncertainty and pain on her face.

"Yes, of course, Miss Mowbray. I am sure you will make no unnecessary delay, for the children have had already too long a holiday. Now I will say good night. Mark me, I do not take offence at your asking time for deliberation. It is business-like, and a way I have myself."

Then Mr. Absalom Marsh took his departure, well pleased, on the whole, with his visit.

"Now then, let us make ourselves comfortable, Marjorie, my dear. I may call you Marjorie, may I not? I am old enough to be your mother."

"Indeed, I shall be less lonely if you will omit the 'Miss.' But I am not a young girl. When a woman reaches thirty she is no longer a girl."

"Perhaps you are not a girl, but you are young compared with me. Tiger, I think you might let Lion have more of the fire. You have been sitting there all the evening

while he has given way to me." The cat rose up, and walked quietly over to Marjorie, and sat down close beside her, looking up at her in a lazy, sleepy fashion. "Ah! Tiger has extended his friendship to you, I perceive," said Miss Macnab, as she watched the movements of her pet. "You may find him useful sometime. He is so intelligent! I have sent him many a message, and he always does his work properly. All the ordinary cats and dogs of the neighbourhood are afraid of him, and there is not another Persian in the town. He is very fierce when he is roused, and he is inclined to be quarrelsome. I suppose he takes after his mistress in the latter failing."

There was silence for a while, Miss Macnab busy with her knitting needles, and Marjorie thinking how happy was the life of this old maid.

"On what are you meditating so deeply, my dear Marjorie?"

"I believe I was almost envying you your happiness."

"What! Do you forget that I am a solitary old maid?"

"You certainly are not solitary, and I never did think that marriage ought to be the chief aim of a woman's life. What married woman could be happier than you?"

"Well, well, that's as it may be. Of course, I am happy and contented, but I don't specially recommend a state of single blessedness to women. Well, now you have some idea of our little town after Mr. Absalom Marsh's visit. It is a lively place with one thing and another, and it has its mystery also, like all well-regulated country towns. About a mile and a-half distant, quite in the country, is a house called Manor House, surrounded by grounds and gardens, and with a large farm belonging to it. The owner of it and of the farm was a certain John Ashton, who had a wife and daughter. The wife died leaving a baby a week old, and John Ashton married his housekeeper six months afterwards. He died six months after his second marriage, leaving two children to the care of the stepmother. The eldest was a girl about fifteen or sixteen, the younger almost a baby still. Then trouble arose between the stepmother and the girl. I don't believe any one

knows the right story, but it seems to have been a sort of mutual jealousy, for John Ashton left everything to his second wife. Well, I have always taken the girl's part, although it all happened before I settled in Market Hawley, and I knew neither the woman nor the girl. It must have been hard to bear to see her own mother's servant occupying her mother's place, and ruling all the household. At any rate, however it was, the girl and the child disappeared one night from the Manor House, and were never seen afterwards. Mrs. Ashton seems to have been filled with remorse or fear then, for she has been seeking her step-children ever since that night. She does not live in the Manor House, but she returns to it at rare intervals. An old woman and her husband mind the house, and the farm is let now to a nice young fellow, who comes to visit me sometimes. They say the stepmother is an old woman, very wrinkled, and very white-haired. Mr. Absalom Marsh has seen her, but she never remains longer than a day or two in the Manor House. Is it not a strange story? Imagine that old woman wandering up and

down the earth in search of the children she had wronged in some way! Very likely they are both dead, and she will never find them. Surely her untiring energy, backed by her money, would have been successful long ago, if they were alive."

"It is, indeed, a strange story," said Marjorie, as she rose to go to her home. "And it all happened years ago, you say?"

"Yes, more than fifteen years ago."

"That is a long time, a very long time. The stepmother has suffered greatly for her wrong-doing, whatever it was, if it be true she is searching for the children."

"Yes, she is still suffering for it. Well, good night, Marjorie dear. Sleep soundly, and make up your mind to accept Mr. Absalom Marsh's offer."

CHAPTER IV.

MARJORIE'S TEMPTATION.

WHEN Marjorie reached her lodgings she went directly to her bedroom, and locking the door sat down to think. In all the emergencies of her life, she had decided for herself. She had never had anyone to appeal to since the birth of her only sister, so many years her junior. It was no new thing for her to meditate thus deeply about that which concerned the welfare of her sister. But to-night she seemed to be unable to come to any decision.

Here was a most advantageous offer; she had not received such a one in all her hard-working life; it meant comfort, good masters, and, perhaps, even the realization of her dreams for her sister; and it meant light labour and comfort for herself. Why, then, did she hesi-

tate? Evidently Miss Macnab, her new friend, was astonished at such hesitation, and no wonder.

How delighted Nettie would be when she heard of their increased income! She needed to count her shillings so carefully, yes, and her pennies also: now there would be no necessity for such extreme care. And she could come and spend her holidays in Market Hawley, and get some pretty sketches from the surrounding country. Perhaps the Manor House itself might tempt her pencil: it was quaint enough. Yes, and they might even take a trip to the seaside during the very hot weather.

"If any man serve Me let him follow Me."

Whose voice was that? There was no one in the room but herself. Why should those words sound so distinctly through the quiet chamber? What had they to do with the subject? Nothing at all, of course. She was a follower of Christ, certainly—at least she had been trying to follow Him for more than ten years past; but that had nothing to do with the acceptance or refusal of Mr. Absalom Marsh's offer. How could it have anything to do with it?

Ah! yes, she would accept the post of teacher for this school. She would give up her engagement with Mrs. West, perhaps, and retain Mrs. Newton's children. Then she would not be so hard-worked, and she would have time to read a little more, and improve herself, for it was so easy to forget, even when one has been well educated. Of course she would not refuse to teach Mrs. West's children if their mother considered the refusal a breach of contract. The business must be settled amicably, if possible.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth . . . . or maketh a lie."

Again that voice, sounding clearly, urgently, through the night stillness. What was the meaning of it? Was some person really speaking, or did she imagine it? Was she so familiar with the words of the Book that now in the lonely night season they came to her unbidden, even as unexpected guests. Well, what if they did come? *Words* could not harm her and ought not to frighten or trouble her.

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Ah! she would go to bed. There was no use trying to come to any decision when she was so constantly interrupted by inappropriate words from the Bible. To-morrow morning no doubt her brain would be clearer, and she would be able to say a definite "yes" or "no."

* * * * * *

"So you have decided to take the school," said Miss Macnab next morning, when she met Marjorie in the main street. "I am so glad, my dear, for it will give yourself and your sister pleasure and comfort, and will cause Mr. Absalom Marsh undoubted satisfaction. With all his peculiarities, he is a good man, and a useful man in the town. He will go in sometimes and inspect your work, no doubt, and you must try not to laugh at him, for he knows nothing whatsoever about the 'deeper subjects,' as he calls them."

"What are his wife and daughter like?

Are they also ignorant of the 'deeper subjects,' as he calls them?"

"Indeed, they are. You will not dislike Mrs. Marsh, I think, but I am afraid you will not find Louisa a congenial companion. Indeed, my dear, I don't know where you are going to find a companion sufficiently accomplished and enlightened."

"Now, Miss Macnab, you are laughing at me."

"No, indeed, I am not. You must know we think a great deal in this town of any one who is a graduate of London University, and who can sing and play so well as I hear you can. Why, you are all the virtues and talents bound up together. We have very few nice girls in the town."

"I should not care for a girl companion. You forget I have Nettie, and I have you. You promised to be my friend, and what more do I want?"

"Well, well, we shall see. I met Mrs. Marsh just now, and she said she and Louisa would call on you this afternoon, and our minister also intends calling."

"Oh! dear," uttered Marjorie, in some

dismay; "I thought I was going to live very quietly."

"So you can. They will not expect you to entertain them, although they may think it their duty to entertain you. You will like and respect our minister. This is his first year, but we all praise him; positively there is not a dissentient voice, not even Miss Louisa's."

"Does Miss Marsh indulge in dissent, then?"

"She believes it due to her literary and intellectual exaltation as the daughter of an editor of a paper to criticize people and things in a harsh, dissatisfied spirit. A mind such as hers should not be easily contented with that which pleases ordinary mortals. Now then, Maria Macnab, I am ashamed of you. Finding fault with another, when you are so full of faults yourself. You must not heed all I say, my dear. Leave out the unkind, sharp speeches. My tongue runs away with me at times.—Do you find your lodgings comfortable?"

"Yes, thank you. I have the first floor sitting-room and bedroom. They are well-

furnished, and my landlady is inclined to be kind to me."

"That's right. I am delighted you are next door to me. You can run in to tea constantly, and so relieve the monotony of my evenings. There, good-bye for the present. I have kept you standing here for a long while."

Marjorie looked after the little woman with loving, admiring eyes.

"How good she is; how thoroughly and sincerely good she is!"

On that afternoon the wife and daughter of Mr. Absalom Marsh visited Miss Mowbray.

"Absalom told me you had consented to teach his school, and he thinks very highly of you. I am sure we are pleased to welcome you amongst us. Are we not, Louisa?"

Marjorie replied in suitable terms.

"I suppose you already know Miss Macnab well; she is your next door neighbour. We have not a very lively town, Miss Mowbray, and we are chiefly busy business people, so it will seem a good bit different from London. Absalom says London is splendid."

"London is nice enough at times, but its noise and heat and closeness grow oppressive when you live in it during the summer months."

"Just hear that, Louisa. Why, Pa thought it altogether splendid."

"Of course Miss Mowbray will find Market Hawley dull after London, but we are not so far behind after all," said Miss Marsh quickly. She did not wish this new teacher to have a low opinion of the people amongst whom she had elected to dwell. In fact, Miss Louisa would have liked to have impressed Miss Mowbray with a sense of the importance of the Marsh family, but she did not quite know how to do that.

"Well, Miss Mowbray will have an opportunity of judging of some of our people if she joins us after meeting on Wednesday night. We have a prayer meeting in the Chapel every Wednesday night, and our minister likes us to attend pretty regular. Louisa always goes, and I go as often as I can. We'll have a few of the neighbours in on Wednesday night to supper, and we'll be glad to see you."

Marjorie thanked Mrs. Marsh, and accepted the invitation.

"Louisa goes in sometimes to inspect the school, so you mustn't be surprised to see her and the minister every other day or so."

"Oh! Ma, not quite so often as that. You'll be frightening Miss Mowbray. I go in occasionally and teach them a song or two, and Mr. Welsh lectures them."

Marjorie wondered how the last teacher endured that sort of inspection, and she there and then resolved that she would have none of it, but she made no comment upon Miss Marsh's unexpected and unpleasing announcement. "The intellect of youth," continued Miss Marsh, "requires careful handling. We must not give them strong meat all the time, and no sweets. You will supply the strong meat, Miss Mowbray, and I will supply the sweets in the shape of singing, and perhaps story-telling. Papa says you are a graduate of London University. He is quite enthusiastic on the University subject, and sent away a good teacher and a friend of mine because she hadn't a degree. Now, I don't quite go with him, though I

approve of a sound education in a measure. However, I hope you will come up to his expectations in every way. Pa has such hope. I tell him it is at best a disappointing world."

"Why, Louisa, my lovey, you have no reason to say it is a disappointing world. You have everything to make a girl happy: good looks, plenty of money, and plenty of friends." Her mother spoke in perfect good faith; she thought her daughter beautiful. Louisa had pale straw-coloured hair, pale blue eyes, a thin face, and an angular form. She was about six years younger than Marjorie, though she scarcely looked so young. She resembled her father in many respects, but she lacked his good nature and his forgiving disposition.

"Well, Ma, I don't mean to say I have any active sorrows, but to speculative minds, this earth is composed of shadow and sunshine."

"As you speak of sunshine, I do believe it's shining again after that shower, so we'd better be going homeward."

When her visitors had departed, Marjorie sat down and laughed softly.

"Miss Louisa Marsh reads very light literature, I expect; she talks as the lackadaisical heroines in the 'penny terribles' do. But she could be very unkind if she chose."

Now, Marjorie was quite right in her estimate of Miss Marsh.

CHAPTER V.

A SOCIAL GATHERING.

FOR the first few weeks Marjorie succeeded very well with the school. Miss Marsh was on a visit with friends in a town a little distance from Market Hawley, and Mr. Absalom Marsh was particularly busy over some articles on Addison, which he was bringing out in *Cleanliness;* so she had none of the anticipated unpleasant interruption to her work. She found that the pupils really knew nothing beyond the very rudiments of history, geography, and arithmetic; evidently there had been an abundant supply of the "sweets" during the last teacher's rule, and very little of the "strong meat." The children on the whole were willing to learn, and inclined to be obedient. The new teacher had such a

reputation for "deep" learning, that they were somewhat in awe of her; and her energetic fashion of instructing them, and attending to nothing else but work during school hours, bewildered them, and astonished them into obedience and industry.

Marjorie concluded she had done right in accepting the post. She could really improve the school very much ; but it would be many a long day before they would be fit to receive even elementary instruction in any of those "deeper subjects" upon which Mr. Absalom Marsh laid such stress. It would take a year's hard study, and much mutual patience, before the children could be said to have a "fair knowledge" of history, geography, grammar, and spelling. Where would be the use of teaching them algebra, when they could not work a simple sum in addition correctly ; or what would be the use of lecturing them on Political Economy, when their knowledge of history was so limited, and when they possessed no knowledge at all of literature? These two latter subjects would be of more service to them than Political Economy. Perhaps when a year had passed they would be

fit for the "deeper" subjects. Well, a year was a long time, and much private study as well as public teaching might be accomplished in that interval.

One day two months after Marjorie had begun her school duties, a pressing invitation to tea arrived from Mrs. Marsh. There was to be a small "social gathering" that evening at the house of Mr. Absalom Marsh: would Miss Mowbray make one of the number? Marjorie accepted, wondering if she would meet any new faces, and anticipating criticism on her manner of teaching the school. She knew she would have to explain why the "deeper subjects" were as yet absent from the school course, but she was prepared for that, and rather wished to have the explanation over. She called in to see her friend on her way to the house of Mr. Absalom Marsh, but she found Miss Macnab laid up with a severe cold, and quite unable to leave her arm chair by the blazing fire. How comfortable she looked there, free apparently from all anxiety and annoyance, even though she was suffering from a cold. How happy her face looked, and how her eyes shone with amusement as she related

Lion's last exploit, that sagacious and dignified dog seeming meanwhile serenely conscious of the fact that he formed the subject of conversation.

"How I wish I could stay with you instead of going to meet a number of strangers. I think you are a most enviable mortal," said Marjorie, as she reluctantly made a movement to depart. Miss Macnab laughed heartily, to the extreme discomfort of Tiger, who was sleeping peacefully with his head on his mistress' footstool.

"Go away, child, and don't be so foolish. I wonder how many times you have envied me since your arrival in Market Hawley. I am really surprised at a young person of such superior abilities and attractions envying a little eccentric old maid. That is what my friends generally call me. Well, if you live unmarried until you are as old as I am, and get a dog, a cat, and a tiny house, you will be just like me; so never despair. There's a glorious future for you! Go, my dear, or Mr. Absalom Marsh will be kept waiting for his tea. Come in to-morrow evening, and tell me how you liked the 'social gathering.' You'd

better let Lion escort you to your destination, for there are a number of ugly people about the streets and roads since the failure of that factory seven miles away. No, I know you have not far to go, but Lion may as well get accustomed to looking after you. He is my escort always when I go out. The exercise does him good, and he has a decided dislike to objectionable characters. He saved my life twice when I lived in the colliery district."

"I wonder he was never poisoned," said Marjorie.

"They tried it once, but I have trained him to eat nothing outside the house. He never touches anything he sees along the roads, and he will not take even a bun from a friend's hand except I say he may do so. There would be no use in trying to poison him, for he would not eat the stuff. Now, Lion, see Miss Marjorie safely to the door of Mr. Marsh's house, and come back again."

"Ah! Lion," said Marjorie, as she walked along the dark street, her hand on the dog's neck; "I could never be like your mistress. She is far more than an old maid, with a cat, a dog, and a house." Lion looked gravely

into her face, and waved his tail slowly from side to side. He had conceived a great affection for this new friend of his mistress, and Marjorie returned it. When that particularly pretentious house in the main street was reached where dwelt the Marsh family, Lion waited until the door was opened and then trotted away, after receiving a parting caress from Marjorie.

Mrs. Marsh welcomed Marjorie with cordiality, and Louisa gave her a languid hand.

"We were just speaking of you before you came in," said Miss Marsh, regarding with condemnatory eyes the red velveteen dress adorned with a bunch of ivy leaves which Marjorie wore. "Mr. Welsh tells me that he has not often visited the school in my absence, so I suppose the children, having had nothing but Algebra and Political Economy, have grown very learned and, I am afraid, very dull. Poor things! We must try to enliven them a little."

"I think they must have suffered much from the idle time they had after the departure of their last teacher, for they were

ignorant of the merest elementary education," returned Marjorie quietly, as she held out her hand in greeting to Mr. Welsh, who came and stood opposite to her on the hearth-rug. "They don't need any recreation for a long time to come ; they have had more than enough of it, if I may judge by their present attainments." She spoke in a determined, resolute manner, although inwardly she was far from feeling resolute. She desired to make Miss Marsh understand that she would have no interference with her work as teacher, and she did not particularly care to answer many questions on the subject. She hoped to be able to say all she wanted concerning it, and then to allude to it no more while she remained in Market Hawley. Otherwise how could she know any rest or peace, she thought, with unwonted tears in her eyes : tears of self-pity and of a penitence now too late.

"Then you think their last teacher was ignorant?" queried Louisa calmly.

"Oh! no ; I don't think any such thing," answered Marjorie quickly, as she noted that other of the guests were taking an interest in the conversation, and drawing nearer to listen.

"But they have evidently been idle; that I do know. How else should I have found them so ignorant?"

"I believe Miss Mowbray is right," said the minister. "We wasted too much of the school's time last year, but I will lay all the blame on Miss Marsh. She led, and I followed; so please absolve me, Miss Mowbray."

Marjorie smiled. "I don't blame anyone: why should I? But I like to do whatever I do with all my might. These children must be taught in earnest, and to that end I must have them to myself without outward interference or interruptions."

"Quite right, Miss Mowbray; quite right. So you shall have undisputed authority in my school. Who would not bow down to superior intellectual merit. I, even *I*, bow to it, and try to hold it up to admiration. Now, these weeks past I have been holding up Addison in the pages of *Cleanliness*. Great man, Addison. Of course *you* know who I mean, Miss Mowbray. He didn't live exactly in my time or yours, but we can become acquainted with him through his writings. I

can recommend him to your notice also, Mr. Welsh, for he was a godly man. He wrote hymns full of piety. He had a contented, cheerful mind. He says in a number of the *Spectator* — he was an editor as well as myself—that 'cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind, and fills it with a perpetual serenity.' No doubt that man was well aware of the value of cleanliness, for nothing is so conducive to serenity as a clean heart in a clean body. There you are—cleanliness next to godliness."

"You were going to introduce me to Miss Mowbray," said a man's voice from behind the broad back of the soap-maker at this juncture.

"Ah! yes, to be sure. But I had not forgotten. I always go straight to the point. No beating about the bush for me. Why—! You know her already, John Weston."

"Yes, I met Mr. Weston in London," said Marjorie quietly. "But I did not think that Miss Macnab's friend was also an acquaintance of my own."

"Well, now, that's very pleasant," continued Mr. Absalom Marsh. "Perhaps you will be

able to persuade him to attend our chapel here when the evenings grow longer. He used to come, but latterly he deserted us and went to a church near his place out at the Manor House."

"Mr. Weston has already promised to come back to us, Pa," said Louisa sharply.

"Oh! I am glad to hear that. I suppose our minister persuaded you. I knew you would like him when you had heard him preach." Then the editor of *Cleanliness* walked away to another part of the room, quite unconscious of the fact that the minister might not desire such open commendation. Louisa and Mr. Welsh entered into an earnest conversation regarding some hymns for the next Sunday's services, while John Weston, the rich farmer and friend of Miss Macnab, stood silently looking at Miss Mowbray. He was a tall, fair man, three or four years Marjorie's senior, with honest, truthful eyes, and a kindly smile.

"You don't ask after Nettie," said Marjorie, growing slightly embarrassed under his steady gaze; "and you don't ask how I got here."

"I know the latter," he answered quietly; "Miss Marsh told me. But, as you claimed me as an *acquaintance* only, I thought you might resent any personal questions from me."

"You are mistaken," she returned, in a tone equally low; "you may be my friend if you wish. Nettie is very well and studying very hard at present. She will come to me in the summer for a couple of months."

"You will not be so lonely without her if you have the companionship of Miss Macnab. I think you said you knew her?"

"Yes, she is my next-door neighbour, and I am very fond of her. I go often to see her in the evenings."

"Ah! She is also my friend. Many a laugh she has given me, and many a scolding too."

They were standing near the fire as they talked, and Marjorie seemed all at once to feel the room grow very hot; a confused sensation of astonishment and of pleasure made her head giddy. She had actually succeeded in making Miss Marsh understand that visitors were not welcome in the school, and she had spoken to John Weston, a man

she had never expected to see again after that day in London when she had refused to marry him. It was chiefly for Nettie's sake she had refused him, as it was for her sake that she was now teaching Mr. Marsh's school. Suddenly the voice of Mr. Absalom Marsh sounded loudly in her ears :

"John Weston, is it true that the Wandering Jew, as Miss Macnab calls the mysterious mistress of the Manor House, has returned to her abode? They say you have seen her."

"Look, Pa! You have so shattered Miss Mowbray's nerves that she is going to faint."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MANOR HOUSE.

"REALLY, I am very sorry. I had no idea you were nervous, or I wouldn't have spoken so abruptly," said her host in much real distress, when he saw Marjorie's pale face and tottering form.

"It is nothing; I am better now. I think the fire was too hot for me. I should apologize for being so foolish"; and Marjorie sat down in the nearest chair, and drew a long breath as of one in pain.

"You haven't been looking so well since you began the teaching in earnest, my dear Miss Mowbray," said kind-hearted, fussy Mrs. Marsh, as she came forward with a glass of water in her hand, which her exhausted guest drank with avidity. "You work too hard—that's my opinion."

"Dear me, what a bother about nothing," whispered Miss Marsh to the minister. "She needn't work so hard if she doesn't like to do it. I'd go in for an hour or so three or four times a week, but she almost refused to allow me. A nice thing, if I may not take part in my own father's pet scheme. I declare I've a good mind to say more on the subject to her. Now's the time, when Pa and Ma's there." Before the minister could remonstrate Miss Louisa had joined the circle round Marjorie's chair. "I hope you are better, Miss Mowbray," she said in an apparently kindly tone. "You will perhaps now re-consider your objection to our visiting the school. When you are not over-strong, I should say that freedom from work for an hour or so occasionally during school time would be most desirable."

"I am usually very strong, thank you, and quite able to perform my duties. This was only a slight faintness from the heat."

"Well, I must say I think you are very foolish in imagining yourself made of iron. But perhaps you, like most teachers, refuse to follow in the footsteps of your predecessor,

simply because they are her footsteps. Because she liked my assistance in her work, you will not accept it."

John Weston cast a very indignant glance at the speaker, and Mr. Absalom Marsh said in a very pompous tone:

"Now, Louisa, I can have none of that sort of talk. Miss Mowbray is a London University woman, and above such petty nonsense. You should apologize for your remark."

"I'm sure I do, Pa dear," said his daughter sweetly. "It was made in all innocence and without intent to hurt Miss Mowbray."

"Of course, of course, my dear, and Miss Mowbray is too sensible to take offence. Let us change the subject."

Shortly afterwards Marjorie quitted the room, unperceived by all but John Weston, who followed her, and waited in the hall until she was muffled and ready to go home.

"I was too tired to remain longer now," she said wearily, when she perceived him. "Good night, Mr. Weston. Don't look so serious over me; I am quite well now."

"I may see you as far as your door, may I not?" he asked entreatingly.

"Yes, certainly, if you will be so good. Though, indeed, in this quiet town one has no need of escort; it is not like London."

"There are a lot of ill-conditioned, drunken fellows about just now, and I am afraid they will do our workmen harm. I have a number of labourers employed on my farm out near the Manor House, and on a Saturday afternoon, when they come into the town, they meet these fellows and have a drink together. I wish I could put a stop to it. Drink will ruin my respectable workers and their families."

"Talk to the minister about it," replied Marjorie, as she reached her own door. "He is a good and energetic man. You and he might work a reform between you."

When she had taken off her wraps, she returned to her parlour, and lighting a lamp sat down to the table. There was a small pile of books before her, Euclid, Algebra, and Political Economy; the first of these she opened, taking a pencil and a sheet of paper from the table-drawer. But she could not work. Her head was still giddy and her hands trembled. She tried one proposition,

then another; but it was of no use. She found that the simplest of them bore no meaning for her. She could not even comprehend the words:

"Find the centre of a circle."

What could be easier? She tried again and again, but it was of no avail. She could not even make the circle on which to work.

"I must try and steady my nerves," she murmured despairingly. "I could understand all this pretty well last night, and why not to-night? If I do not hurry, I shall not be ready in a year to teach Mr. Absalom Marsh's 'deep' subjects. Poor children! I could educate them well but for that notion of his. I am not taking his money for nothing. I see an improvement already in the older girls, and I think they are beginning to like me too. Mary Higgs brought me flowers yesterday, and her mother thanked me for the improvement in her girl's behaviour at home. Surely, I am not taking money for nothing. Why does Miss Marsh dislike me? I would not object to her coming into the school if she taught the children anything; but their time has been wasted hitherto, and their

attention distracted by those visits. I simply dare not waste the school hours. Real, hard work must be done and a real improvement visible, at least to my eyes. Otherwise I should be neglecting my duty and stealing Mr. Marsh's money."

It was yet early in the night. The town clock had just struck nine; it was too soon to go to bed, and too late to visit Miss Macnab. Study was an impossibility. Should she go out for half an hour and try what effect a short walk would have? It might make her head better, and enable her to sleep. In her present state of unrest and nervousness, it would be quite useless for her to go to bed.

So, wrapping herself up warmly again, she went out into the dark streets, forgetting that some of Mr. Absalom Marsh's guests might see her, or that she might meet some of those drunken factory men of whom she had heard so much. When out of the main street, she paused irresolutely. Which way should she go? The road looked dark and lonely, but she would get a breath of fresh air there, and if it was not so well lighted as the town,

there were lamps on it at intervals for a couple of miles or more; she would have light enough to see where she was going for that distance at any rate.

Having come to this conclusion, she moved rapidly along, the quick motion causing her to feel better already. She met no one save an old woman, who bade her a smiling "good night." There were tall trees here and there on the roadside, and they looked mysterious and strange in the quivering lamplight. She smiled once as she caught herself starting back when one of those spectral trunks appeared suddenly beside her. Would not Nettie smile could she see her, matter-of-fact Marjorie, walking along a lonely country road at night to still restless nervousness, and starting in momentary affright because a leafless tree showed unexpectedly in the lamplight.

When she had gone some distance from the town, she thought she would turn back, as she felt much refreshed both in mind and body. Perhaps sleep would come to her now. Pausing for a moment, she became aware that an unusually brilliant light was flooding the

dark road. She looked round for the cause, and discovered on the opposite side of the way a high iron gate, evidently the mode of entrance into some demesne, and on each side of this gate, fastened on the top of two goat's heads in iron, two red lamps. She could see the long black beards of the goats illuminated by the light from above them, which shone redly through the red glass. While she was standing looking at the strange heads and shoulders of the iron animals, the gate was opened, and a little woman in a fur cloak stepped slowly and feebly out into the road. She stood leaning on a silver-headed stick, and seemed to be waiting for the night air to revive and strengthen her also.

Presently she raised her head and looked up at the goats' heads too, and then at the starless sky beyond. Hers was the face of a very old woman, wrinkled, age-lined, with a pile of white hair above the low forehead, and an anxious, expectant look in the small, sunken eyes. There was a hopeless expression also on the white face, and her whole attitude was suggestive of anxious seeking

and waiting. For whom was she so anxiously seeking and waiting? For no one that she hoped to see that night. That expression had not come into her face then; rather was it the growth of years and years of sorrow, and of a vain repentance. As she turned to re-enter the gate, her glance fell upon Marjorie standing in the road. A slow wonder crept into her old eyes, and she gazed steadily. Probably she was astonished for a moment at seeing a woman at that late hour staring at her as Marjorie was doing.

Then she raised her hand appealingly, and cried in a faint, broken voice, "Stop." But she spoke to the air, for no one answered her, and there was no one in the road. She looked up and down it, but her dim eyes could not pierce the badly lighted darkness, and her unsteady steps would not carry her far from the gate with the black goats' heads.

* * * * * * *

Marjorie hurried homewards with an uncertain, stumbling haste. So that was the Wandering Jew, as Miss Macnab called her; that was the old, wrinkled woman who for

fifteen long years had been seeking for those wronged step-children of hers? Ah! well, she had evidently suffered for her ill-doing. She exactly resembled the portrait that had been painted of her in the energetic little spinster's words. How strange that she should have been the subject of conversation that very evening in the house of Mr. Absalom Marsh! How weird she looked standing between those two goats' heads, while the red light fell from the lamps!

When Marjorie arrived at her home again, she resolved she would go to bed and try to sleep; for if she did not sleep, she would not be able to teach her school on the morrow. But all through her uneasy slumbers she saw that strange old woman, and she heard that weak voice calling out, "Stop." She even dreamed a broken, troubled dream about what she had seen. She thought she had stopped as she was bidden, and had scoffed at the little age-bowed figure in the gateway; and had uttered harsh, unkind words about evil-doers being punished for their wickedness even in this world. She dreamed further that the faint voice had answered meekly,

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

When she opened her eyes the next morning, those words were running in her head,—"Fifteen long years of repentance"—"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." What had she to do with the mystery of the Manor House? Why was she so persistently followed all day by the vision of that strange old woman, looking for something, or for someone, with such untiring energy?

CHAPTER VII

MISS MACNAB ON CLASS-MEETING.

IN the fair, bright spring weather, the country round Market Hawley looked gay and smiling. The tender green of the trees and grass, the pale, pretty primroses, and the many sweet-smelling blossoms that peeped out from the shelter of the young hedges charmed Marjorie's vision, and ought to have gladdened her heart. She was now much beloved by her scholars, and by their parents too, for the most part, in whose homes she was no stranger. She met John Weston frequently in Miss Macnab's pleasant parlour, and he and she were close friends, consulting one another on many a scheme for the benefit of the working folk of Market Hawley. Mr. Welsh, the minister, was also a friend of hers,

and she assisted him with her singing on the Temperance Evenings which he and John Weston had established to try and check the evil of drunkenness which had somehow gained a footing in the town. These meetings were held in the schoolroom adjoining the Wesleyan Chapel, and were well attended and very popular.

There was one subject upon which Mr. Welsh and Marjorie could not agree, and that was—Class-Meeting. She would never attend his meeting for mutual prayer, and for conversation concerning Christ's kingdom, and the best method of increasing it upon earth. In this little gathering there was nothing to make the members uncomfortable or nervous. A hymn was sung and a short prayer offered by Mr. Welsh, or some good woman who felt inclined to pray. Then a few verses of the Bible were taken as a foundation for the conversation which followed, and in which any joined who wished. They related to one another anything of interest which might have occurred to them in their efforts to aid, cheer, and lead aright those with whom they had come in contact during the week. If

they desired to say anything about their own inner life, they said it, but they did not *stand up* to say it. In fact, it was an ordinary meeting of friends, only that the conversation was entirely of Christ and of His kingdom.

This was what Mr. Welsh called "Class-Meeting," but there are many readings of that term.

One evening as Marjorie was sitting at tea with Miss Macnab, Mr. Welsh's meeting became the subject of conversation.

"He is rather afflicted, poor man, because you will not attend it. My dear Marjorie, I really wish you would. It is nice, you may be sure, when I go so regularly. There are class-meetings *and* class-meetings. I expect I know the sort of thing with which you are acquainted. The minister gives out a verse of a hymn, the members rise and sing it in a straggling, half-hearted fashion, wondering the while how they will word their 'experience,' which they must repeat presently. I say *repeat*, advisedly. Then perhaps the minister prays for a minute or two. After that the members seat themselves until the minister speaks again, and this time he relates his

'experience.' No doubt what he says is right enough, and good as far as it goes; but no one understands very clearly what he has said, for will not their own turn come shortly? Then they rise to their feet one after the other, and one whispers a few words in a faltering voice, which *no one* hears; another repeats a verse of a hymn; another weeps without intermission; another more courageous, and more accustomed to the business, perhaps, than the others, speaks for five minutes about the goodness of God generally. Now, which of these all has related her 'experience'? Has the member who wept but spoke no words? Has the member who whispered in an inaudible voice? Has even the member who spoke for five minutes? It is a serious thing to talk of relating one's 'experience.' Who would reveal the innermost workings of her heart to any mortal? It is a wrong word altogether to use, and might often lead to hypocrisy. The member is on his or her feet; he must say *something;* he tries to do so. But what good can such a meeting do any person? There is no pleasure, no freedom, and no help in such a meeting. There are some people, I suppose

who like it, or the thing would not exist; but for one person it assists, it injures a dozen, especially young people. That is really the reason why so many young people avoid going to what is generally understood to be class-meeting. It is about time that the ministers gave the subject their serious consideration; if they don't do so, they'll soon have no members, and I don't wonder at it. But, Marjorie, dear, Mr. Welsh's meeting is the right sort of thing. Before it is half over you get warmed up to talk. You know there is no need for your doing so; that no one will be astonished or look reproachfully at you if you are silent; but somehow you don't think about it. You put in your little word quite naturally, although before you started to go to the meeting you had no intention of speaking except to exchange salutations with your friends."

"I am sure Mr. Welsh's meeting is everything that is nice," returned Marjorie, half smiling at Miss Macnab's energy; "but I don't feel inclined to attend it at present. I have gone to such an uncomfortable class-meeting as you describe, and I was generally too frightened to get much good from it."

"Of course you were," said the little spinster energetically. "I do feel so indignant sometimes, and so incapable of speech on this matter. I once persuaded a young friend to go to a class-meeting professedly for the young, and I assure you, my dear, I could have cried with vexation afterwards. She asked me if I thought it an enjoyable affair. She said the Episcopal Church people had no such institution, and they were Christians also; and she really thought they were in the right of it, for she could not understand how it particularly served any good purpose. It would be wrong to say I was not angry—really and truly *angry*, and no nonsense about it."

"But, Miss Macnab, Mr. Welsh's style of meeting is very unusual, I think. Does not Mr. Absalom Marsh hold a class in the way you dislike, and he is a member of Mr. Welsh's chapel?"

"Yes, and enjoys it too. But it is for old brothers and sisters, and they are contented with it. Let those who get good from it have it, and let those who want something else have it also. There should be Mr. Welsh's kind of meeting for young people, and it should

have a *young* leader to conduct it; then all would be right. No, I am not talking heresy. I believe most heartily in class-meeting, but let it be a living, helping, enjoyable, comfortable affair. Then young people will neither scoff at it nor make excuses for not attending it. I am not a young person, but I prefer Mr. Welsh's meeting to that conducted by Mr Absalom Marsh. I am afraid I have tired you with all this talking."

"Oh! no; your views on the subject are mine exactly."

"You don't look well, my dear. You should brighten up with the brightening weather. Everything has gone well with you, so you have no reason to be melancholy."

"No, indeed," returned Marjorie earnestly; "the good folk of Market Hawley have been most indulgent to my failings—all except Miss Marsh. I cannot imagine how I have offended her. I know I would not have any visiting in school hours, to distract the attention of the children, but that was because I felt I must try and teach the children in earnest, and *make* them progress if possible.

"Hers is an envious, jealous disposition,

said Miss Macnab, quietly, but with a half smile. "She was head of Market Hawley until you came, and the minister was her constant companion. Even John Weston used to talk to her sometimes, though I must say her bitter tongue was generally too much for him. Now both these men have taken you for their friend and adviser. John Weston was an old friend. Yes, I know. But the minister never saw you before you came to Market Hawley."

"Oh! Miss Macnab, please don't talk as if my influence was greater than hers. I don't deserve all the kindness I have received, and from her father too. I am very sorry Mr. Welsh has ceased to be so intimate with her since my arrival here. He ought not to have acted so; it was not right of him."

"My dear, no one says he wants to marry either you or Miss Louisa, but simply you give him real assistance in his work, and she did not." Marjorie looked so relieved that her friend laughed. "You are so evidently pleased he has no matrimonial intentions that you forget to be angry with me for saying such a thing to you."

"How could I be angry with you, whatever you might say to me?" answered Marjorie affectionately.

There was to be a Temperance Meeting that evening in the Wesleyan Schoolroom, so Marjorie hurried away from Miss Macnab's tea table to take part in it. The room was crowded, many working men and women filling up the seats. First there were two or three short speeches, then Miss Marsh sang a Temperance song, then more speeches and stories, and then a song from Miss Mowbray. This latter took the fancy of the women folk particularly, it was so sweet, so pathetic; and they urged their husbands and brothers to try and get her to sing again. When Marjorie heard the clapping and the stamping and the calls for just another song, she wondered what she could sing them, for she had not brought the music of a second song with her.

"Do give them something else, Miss Marjorie," whispered John Weston. "I believe not one of them will go to a whisky shop to-night."

Mr. Absalom Marsh had been bringing out a second set of papers an Addison in *Clean-*

liness, and at the end of the last of the papers he had given a hymn written by that great man, as a proof of his godliness. Marjorie had always liked that special hymn, and she had composed a pretty, tuneful chant to it for her own private singing; this she now resolved to let the audience hear. Most of the men and women present read *Cleanliness*, so they would be familiar with the words.

She seated herself at the piano, facing the impatient audience, and sang it, her splendid, well trained contralto voice echoing solemnly through the long room :

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.

"The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display ;
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

"Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth ;

"Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

"What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice or sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found—

"In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing as they shine,
'The hand that made us is divine.'"

When she had finished, the applause was great.

"Why, 'tis the hymn as Master put in the paper this very week. Paper says 'twas written by a great man as lived more'n a hundred years agone," said the men; while the women cried over Marjorie's grand, solemn voice, and felt awed and subdued in spite of themselves.

"If the hand as made us is divine, we'll let the beer shop be to-night," muttered some of the elder men. "It would be a downright shame to go a-brawlin' and a-singin' arter that 'ere grand thing."

So most of the audience went quietly and soberly past the public houses that night, and the solemn, beautiful voice of the singer, and the "sensible, splendid, reasonable words of that 'ere song," rang for many a day in the ears of the Market Hawley folk.

CHAPTER VIII.

EVIL SEED SOWN.

"SHE did it just to please you, Pa. She knew you'd been writing those articles, and so of course she sang the hymn."

Mr. Absalom Marsh and his family were at breakfast on the morning after the Temperance Meeting. The editor of *Cleanliness* was in a deeply gratified frame of mind. To think that Miss Mowbray should have sung Addison's hymn in that splendid voice of hers to such a crowd of people! Why, of course it brought *Cleanliness* into great notice, and emphasized in a most original and highly graceful manner the good opinion the paper expressed of that eminent man.

"Well, my dear, and if she did it to please me, the act is more commendable still. But

don't believe that was her motive. She is a young woman with a very well-regulated mind, and she evidently reads and appreciates such men as Addison and Shakespeare and others of our great literary masters. I think I shall ask her to write an article for *Cleanliness.* She deserves some public recognition of her merits."

"If you do, Pa, I won't write for it again, and then what'll you do for your tales and lighter matter?"

Mr. Marsh eyed his daughter solemnly through his spectacles.

"What has Miss Mowbray done to offend you, Louisa? I don't understand you in the least."

"She refused my assistance in the school, and now she would turn me off *Cleanliness.* I declare it's too bad."

"She has nothing to do with *Cleanliness.* It was you who said you would write no more for it. I am afraid you are unreasonable and even unjust. But I hope not. *My* daughter must set an example of all that is right."

"And so she does, Absalom; so she does. There, Louisa lovey, don't cry. Your Pa has

no intention of asking Miss Mowbray to write for his paper."

"I am sure I don't know what is the matter with Louisa," said the much-perplexed father, as he saw tears rolling down his daughter's face.

"The matter is that that horrid Miss Mowbray is liked better than me. Mr. Welsh and Mr. Weston both run after her, and even my own father likes her better than me now. But she's deceiving you all. She teaches nothing in the school only the plainest things that the children could learn anywhere. You have no Euclid, or Algebra, or Political Economy there."

"She's not deceiving me," said Mr. Absalom Marsh, in a dignified tone of voice. "I know why she's leaving those deeper subjects alone just at present, and I'm quite contented."

"Oh! of course you are. She can do what she likes with you. But I tell you she's deceiving you all." With a burst of angry sobs, Miss Marsh quitted the breakfast table, leaving her mother much distressed and bewildered, and her father annoyed and indignant.

She had no foundation whatsoever for her repeated assertion that Marjorie was deceiving

them all, but it sounded tragical and mysterious, and she had been recently reading a book in which those elements predominated. She disliked Marjorie heartily, and so strong a hold had evil over good just then within her, that she would have done almost anything to injure the woman she called her enemy.

As she crossed the hall she saw a man standing at the open hall door, evidently waiting to see some one. She would have passed on without speaking to him, but he made a step forward and took off his old, battered cap.

"May I speak a minute with you, Miss?"

She then recognized him as James Higgs, a workman of her father's who had been dismissed the previous week for continued drunkenness.

"Well, what have you to say? I suppose you want to speak to my father."

"No, Miss; 't wouldn't be no use yet. You might ask him to take me back, Miss. I'm very badly treated; that I am. Since them Timperance Meetin's began, there's no allowance made for a drop o' drink at all. I used to always have my sup—ay, and the missus too—and no harm done; but now the missus

she's timperance, and Mary goes to school, and I'm turned out o' my place because I takes a drop. I haven't a penny piece as I can call my own now. Missus, she earns money enough, but she won't give me none o' it for a drop. I'm very badly off."

"You ought to go to Miss Mowbray, and not come to me. She told Pa to turn you away, very likely, and she made your wife and daughter abstainers. You have her to thank for it all. But here's a half-crown for you; I can't speak to father just now about you. I may another time; only if I do, you'll go on loving Miss Mowbray just the same as if she and not I had befriended you. You're all so fond of her, that your master's daughter counts for nothing." Louisa walked away, and the man, clutching the silver coin, and gazing at it with eager, unbelieving eyes, stumbled along the street to the nearest public house, which he entered, and called for a glass of whisky and water. He was already partially intoxicated, and Miss Marsh's words took hold of his muddled senses.

Evidently, she did not like the schoolmistress either. She spoke as if she pitied

him, and she had given him half-a-crown. Yes, he certainly was to be pitied, and of course he owed it all to Miss Mowbray. He saw that clearly enough now, though he hadn't seen it before. Miss Marsh was kind and generous: Miss Mowbray hard and cruel. Why should he let his daughter stay any longer at the school of such a woman? True, the school belonged to Mr. Absalom Marsh; but he liked Miss Mowbray and employed her to teach his school. He would be angry also if the girl was taken away, as taken away she most certainly should be, and this very day too. The sooner the better. School had commenced an hour ago. Now was the time to go and do the deed.

Somewhat in this manner the half-drunken man reasoned within himself, as he drank his whisky and water slowly, and looked at the half-crown with affectionate eyes. He did not want to change it to pay for his drink, but he feared the bar-keeper would refuse to allow him to leave the shop without payment; so he staggered to his feet, paid what was due and went out into the street, taking the turning that led to the school.

Mary Higgs was working out a sum for the benefit of her class, when her father walked into the schoolroom and presented himself before the astonished gaze of Marjorie. There was complete silence instantaneously, and all eyes turned upon the intruder. He stumbled on to Marjorie's desk, where she sat staring at him in too great an amazement to speak.

"Ay, you may well be frightened, Miss," he said loudly, mistaking the cause of her silence. "You've done me a fine mischief with your deccitful, timperance ways. You've broke up the peace o' my home, and not content with that, you've took my situation from me. Oh! yes, I heard all about it this morning. You're a wicked young woman, that's what you are, and I dare any one to deny it, You're not fit to teach my young and innocent daughter. Get your books and things, Mary, and come home along o' me. This is no place for you."

Mary was frightened, as indeed were most of the children, because James Higgs was a big man, and he had a very loud voice when he was drunk. Marjorie recovered from her amazement at the first sound of the man's voice. She saw he was drunk. There was

little use in talking to a man in that condition ; besides, she could scarcely detain Mary against her father's will, even though he was drunk.

"Leave Mary until school is over, to-day," she said quietly. "Then you and her mother can talk about whether she is to continue her attendance or not."

"Then, that I won't," he returned impudently. "You want to make more mischief, do you? You've took my situation, and you've spoiled my missus, but you won't do no more."

"You are quite mistaken. I had nothing to do with your losing your situation," said Marjorie firmly. "Now, we have had enough of this. You had better go with your father at once, Mary, for work has been interfered with long enough."

Mary tearfully prepared to do Marjorie's bidding. She was not afraid to go home, for she knew her mother would take care of her ; but she was ashamed of her father's conduct, and she wanted to finish that sum to get her marks. There was to be an examination in the summer, and prizes were to be given ; all good marks during the year were then counted

up, and a special prize given for them. Now she would lose her marks for the remainder of the day. She half thought she would refuse to go with her father, but one quick look into his angry red face decided her. She hastened her movements, lest he should say something more offensive, or even raise his hand to strike Miss Mowbray.

"To think I should lose my good place along o' you," he muttered, glaring angrily at Marjorie.

She began to grow somewhat uneasy. Should she order him out? If she did, he might hit her with one of those great hands of his, which looked as if they could give a heavy blow. He was scarcely accountable for his actions just then, and in his drunken rage he might do anything. If she could only send for assistance. Evidently the children were too frightened to think of leaving their seats, and she did not deem it wise to tell any of them to go and bring in some one who could turn him out. How long Mary was in gathering her books together!

"I'm ready now, father."

"Oh! you are, are you? Well, I'll just give

this fine young woman a bit more o' my mind. Hear now, Miss. Stop you a-interferin' with decent workin' folk. We don't want none o' your timperance rubbish, nor neither your fine school teachin'! We was well enough off when we hadn't no such doin's. You'd talk forever, you would, but you wouldn't give me no half-crown. Oh! no; you'd take my situation from me, but you wouldn't give me no half-crown. How'm I to live, I'd like to know, when I ain't got no situation? O' course you don't care about that, you don't. If we starve along o' your speechin' and teachin', what's that to you? Oh! I'd like well to learn you a lesson, Miss, as might show you what I thinks o' such a one as you."

"Come home, father; I'm quite ready."

"My situation took from me, and nothin' to get me a sup o' drink," he went on, totally ignoring his daughter.

He stood right in front of Marjorie, so that she could not leave her desk without pushing past him. She sat calmly enough, looking at him, a short mahogany ruler in her hand; inwardly she was very uneasy, and rather frightened. She did not wish the children to think she

was afraid, but she did fervently hope that one of them would be inspired to slip out for assistance. It was this seeming calmness that prevented James Higgs from approaching her. Her quiet eyes, and the untrembling white fingers that held the ruler, daunted him a little in spite of himself.

Suddenly Mary dropped her books on the form behind her, and giving a swift glance into Marjorie's face, stole softly down the school-room, turned the handle noislessly, and ran out into the street. To her delight and relief, she saw John Weston striding along towards her, some books for the school library in his hands.

"Oh! Mr. Weston, please come in. Father's drunk, and he's annoying Miss Mowbray."

In another minute the young man stood within the schoolroom.

"I says I'll do what I likes with Mary. I'm master in my own house."

"By all means, be master in your own house, but Miss Mowbray is master here, and she'll be pleased to see you take your departure."

In a perfect fury, James Higgs turned to

look at the speaker, and Marjorie heaved a great sigh of relief.

"I s'pose you mean I'm to go out, but I won't, Mr. Weston."

"No? Then I must help you to go."

Before the astonished man could say another word, he felt a strong hand on his collar, and he was almost carried out into the street.

"Now, look here, James Higgs. Never annoy Miss Mowbray in any way again. I'm a strong man, and I *always* beat a coward who frightens a woman. You're drunk enough, but you understand me."

"I'll have the law o' you, Mr. Weston, for attackin' me."

"So you may, but you'll be a wise man if you remember what I have just said." And with a glance at the staggering creature that made him quail, John Weston re-entered the schoolroom.

"I'll have my revenge o' her for this. I'll make her pay for this bit o' work. She won't always have Mr. John Weston along o' her."

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING MANY THINGS.

MR. ABSALOM MARSH was very indignant when he heard of James Higgs' conduct. He sent for him and told him that Miss Mowbray had nothing to do with his losing his situation : his drunkenness and general bad habits were the causes. Now, after this cowardly, abominable behaviour, he might never hope to be reinstated. He had better leave the town, and try some other place where he was unknown.

But Higgs believed he owed his dismissal to Marjorie, for Miss Marsh had said so ; and he determined to remain in Market Hawley until he could in some way punish her for it, and for his wife's teetotalism. Of course he spoke to no one of his determination and he

never went near the schoolhouse again, nor interfered with his daughter's schoolwork; but none the less did he brood over his "wrongs" and over his intended "revenge," as he phrased it.

"Is not your sister coming to spend her holiday with you, Marjorie?" asked Miss Macnab, as she and Marjorie sat in the former's parlour, chatting and drinking tea as usual.

"No, she will spend them at the house of a friend in Brighton. She has been working hard, and she needs recreation."

"But won't you be disappointed? You were looking forward so much to her visit."

"Yes, I confess I will be a little disappointed; but she is young and pretty, and she needs amusement and society. I am afraid she would find my lodgings rather dull. Her friend's house will be full of visitors; she will be cheered and refreshed for the autumn's work."

"Then, perhaps, you will go to her for your holiday?"

"Oh! no. I am not very intimate with her friends in Brighton. I couldn't go there, and they would not care to have me either,

Young people enjoy the society of young people."

"Do you call yourself an old person?"

"I am many years Nettie's senior. I must be contented to wait until Christmas for her visit."

"And then she will go to the house of some other young friend, and you will be again disappointed."

"Why, Miss Macnab, you speak quite angrily; quite as if you were disappointed too," said Marjorie, smiling.

"So I am, my dear. I have often heard it said that love begets love, but I don't believe it now."

"If you think Nettie doesn't love me, you are wrong. It is only natural that a young and pretty girl should like a little pleasure."

Miss Macnab said nothing more on the subject, for fear of hurting Marjorie, but she felt rather indignant against this unknown sister.

Next day John Weston called at the little two-storied house in the main street. Miss Macnab attacked him at once on the subject of Marjorie's sister.

"Well, she is very pretty, and she is much younger than Miss Marjorie, as you know," said he in reply. "No doubt she is fond of her sister in a degree, but she loves herself best of all, and she thinks always of her own good first. Miss Marjorie works for her and loves her with a great, unselfish love, and Nettie takes it all calmly, and as a matter of course."

"Just what I imagined she was like," answered Miss Macnab. "I knew it from her letters, which Marjorie shows me sometimes in great pride and delight."

"Yes, Miss Marjorie would give up everything to her, even the man she loved, had he been willing."

"Ah!" ejaculated the little spinster, with a quick gleam of intelligence in her shrewd eyes.

"Miss Marjorie has some strange, distorted ideas of duty towards her sister," continued the young man gravely; "and you could scarcely anger her more than by insinuating that Nettie was selfish or cold-hearted."

In those days Lion accompanied Marjorie in her walks outside the town. Miss Macnab

insisted upon it, in case that man Higgs should again insult or annoy her. One evening she went alone a short distance along the road that led to Manor House. She had been studying after school hours, and she was tired enough to wish for the faint summer breeze, and for the perfume of the summer wild flowers. She did not go as far as Manor House, because it was some way from the town and Lion was not with her.

As she walked she thought of all that had happened since her arrival in Market Hawley, and she wondered once again why it was that Miss Marsh seemed to dislike her so much. Then she thought of Nettie, and hoped she was enjoying herself with her friends in Brighton. That great picture ought soon to be painted now. No doubt the child was working industriously at it, for she would not waste the additional money this Market Hawley teaching was giving her. How nice it would be when that picture was painted. They would have such a pretty little house somewhere near London, for Nettie must not live in the country, she hated it so, and everything would be so happy and comfortable.

Pleasant smiles curved Marjorie's lips as she dreamed those bright-coloured dreams. Suddenly a dark form started up from the shadow of the hedge, and a voice, hoarse and drunken, ordered her to stop. Ah! once before on this very road she had been told to stop—rather, *entreated* to stop—and she had turned and fled; now that she was *ordered* to stop, she stood quite still for an instant; but it was astonishment and fear that compelled her momentary obedience.

"No, no; don't think as you can get away this time, Miss Mowbray. Give me back my situation, I say."

In his drunken rage, Higgs moved a step nearer to her, and raised his hand. She gave a low, half-suppressed cry, when immediately a large black body flung itself against the man, bringing him to the ground with a force that nearly stunned him. Then Lion—for it was that sagacious dog—stood over the prostrate form, and showed his strong white teeth in a decidedly dangerous manner.

"There, Lion, that will do. What a brave, good dog you are! Come home with me now, and leave him alone. He can't hurt me. Come."

Lion reluctantly quitted his threatening contemplation of her annoyer, and, with a parting growl that terrified the man into thinking he was going to be torn to pieces, and that the process had already begun, moved away beside her, his head well in the air, as if he was conscious of having done a very meritorious deed.

When Marjorie and the dog were quite out of sight, Higgs rose from his dusty bed and shook himself, and felt carefully all over his person to discover the wounds those great teeth must have made. He was astonished as well as relieved to find that nothing ailed him but fright.

"Why, I thought as how I must have been tore all to bits. What a brute that is!" he muttered, as he walked slowly towards the town, keeping a cautious look out lest Lion should appear again. "There's somethin' always a-interferin' between me and her. But I'll have another try. She must get me back my situation, or give me a big lot o' money to make up for it. I can't live on odd jobs I must have a settled thing; for the missus is too close with her money to let me have

much. Third time's the charm, they say. What a big, strong dog that is! He knocked me over as easy as if I was a baby. He won't be always with her, neither. I'll have another try."

The brain of the man had become so confused from constant drinking, that he was growing incapable of any clear, sensible thought. He had lost his situation; his wife no longer helped him to obtain drink; Miss Marsh gave him half-a-crown, and told him he owed all his troubles to Miss Mowbray. So, night and day the one idea held possession of him. Miss Mowbray must be forced to make up to him all he had lost through her instrumentality.

Marjorie made mention to no one of her second annoyance from Higgs. She thought he would be afraid to approach her again, because of Lion, and she hoped that time would cure him of his animosity against her. The summer passed slowly enough; she would have been lonely and low-spirited, but for the cheerful society of Miss Macnab. That energetic, happy little woman never suffered from melancholy. This world was

a good enough place if you did not expect to be either perfect yourself or meet with people who were so, she would say. If you tried to love God with all your heart, and your neighbour *as yourself*, you would not be far wrong; and, after all,—there was Christ Himself, and His Heaven awaiting you.

Evidently Marjorie derived no consolation from such thoughts, for she grew paler and more spiritless daily. Perhaps she did not think them at all. Perhaps she was too much occupied with her school, and with her sister's welfare, to give much attention to them. Miss Macnab began to wonder at the change in her favourite, and to grow uneasy concerning it. She could not understand it. Ill-health was not the cause of it, at least in any great degree; for, although Marjorie suffered from headaches occasionally, they were not frequent enough to produce such pale cheeks and such sad eyes. She resolved she would try in some way to effect a cure.

"John Weston," she said suddenly to that astonished young man, one morning, when he called in to see her on his way home after making some necessary purchases for his

household; "I am very much disappointed in you lately; I am indeed. This is holiday time. Business is slow, and schools are closed, but you seem to have quite forgotten all that. Dear me, how selfish you men become without wives to look after you."

"I quite agree with that last remark, but I don't in the least understand what went before it."

"No, of course you don't. You profess an affection for me; I am an old friend of yours; and yet you have not invited me to spend a day at your place. Now, here are the holidays drawing to a close, and Marjorie and I have not been out there; you have never offered us a day's enjoyment in the country this summer, and you could have done so."

"Why, Miss Macnab, you always come whenever you wish to do so. You told me yourself that you disliked invitations. As for Miss Marjorie—I never dreamed of asking her. I have no mother or sisters. I have only a housekeeper and servants. Yet,—if you think she would come, and if you could put up with my housekeeper's ideas of things——." He stopped and looked at her, not knowing

how to put into words the joy he felt at the prospect of seeing Marjorie in his home.

"Of course she will come, and I will come, and we will be delighted with all that we shall see, hear, and—eat. It will be a change for us. Have you invited us?"

"Certainly, I have," he answered, laughingly. "Had I better ask Miss Marjorie personally?"

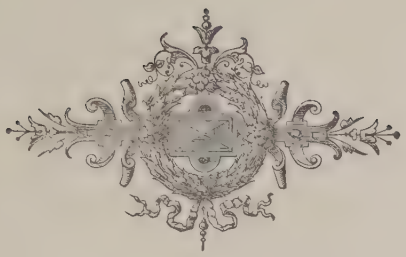
"No; leave the invitation with me, and I will see that she accepts it. I will tell her that you want us both to take luncheon with you to-day at one o'clock, and that you will send a vehicle for us about half-past eleven. There, will that do?"

"Yes. But I must hurry home now, or neither housekeeper nor vehicle will be ready."

Marjorie accepted the invitation in some slight astonishment. Miss Macnab's energy overcame any objection she might have had to the project; but, indeed, she did not make many objections. It would evidently please her friend if she went with her to the Manor House Farm, and John Weston would be glad to see them: why should she not go? Accordingly, when the expected wagonette arrived in the main street, Miss Macnab and

Marjorie were ready waiting for it. It was driven by an old servant-man. Evidently the master was too busy to come in to Market Hawley again that day. He met them at the great-door of the farm, and welcomed them heartily.

"I had to give the head-man orders for the day, so that I might have my time at your disposal without interruption," he whispered to Miss Macnab, while Marjorie passed on before through the open door. And I do hope you will be able to eat your uncheon."



CHAPTER X.

JOHN WESTON'S PROPOSAL.

THEY *were* able to eat their luncheon and to enjoy it, too; for the rapid drive through the cool air had given them an appetite. Then John Weston took them out into the wide, high-walled fruit gardens, and gave them plums and pears, and a few apples that had ripened early, and showed them the glass-houses which were full of gorgeous-hued flowers and of delicate, sweet-smelling lilies. He made them a big bunch of the flowers to take back to Market Hawley with them and he presented each of them with a tiny nosegay as a breast knot. Then he led them, through the winding walks under the trees in the demesne of the Manor House, for the farm and the house were joined by the demesne; but they would not go as far as the

house itself, for fear the Wandering Jew should be there, as Miss Macnab said.

By-and-by the sun and the constant walking began to be too much for Miss Macnab.

"I will go in to that shady parlour of yours, John Weston, and have a sleep. We must be home in time for the meeting to-night, for I never miss my class-meeting; so I will take a rest to refresh myself. You and Marjorie walk away without me, and amuse yourselves until I waken up."

With a smiling nod, she trotted briskly off in the direction of the house, leaving Marjorie and John alone.

"Well, now that you have seen it, how do you like the Manor Farm?" John asked, as he moved on over the grass in the direction of a wooded hill, Marjorie walking slowly by his side.

"It is very lovely here under the trees, and the gardens are beautiful, too; and the old house is comfortable and all that such a house should be," she answered slowly and, it seemed to John's ears, reluctantly. He was somewhat disappointed, for he had hoped she would like it all so much.

"You don't speak very warmly of it. I thought you liked the country."

"Yes, so I do, very much, and indeed it has been pleasant here to-day," she answered earnestly. Then he troubled her no further on the subject. No doubt she also was tired with walking in the sun; and she was not over-strong, as her white face gave token

A silence fell upon them, broken only by the singing of birds and the distant sound of the men's voices in the fields. They had seated themselves on a fallen tree trunk, which lay just beside a great oak. Marjorie took off her hat in order to lean against the oak; her eyelids drooped heavily over her tired eyes, and her thoughts strayed away to the owner of this pleasant place. It was more than fifteen years ago now since that strange old woman had commenced her wanderings. Had she yet found the children for whom she searched? Perhaps she was now in Egypt or Palestine, following some imaginary clue. How very weary she must have become of it all! How she must have longed for rest! Well, she might have rested long ago if she had wished. There was no

one to force her to continue her search. The whole story was most improbable. It would be foolish to believe it for an instant. Report said that a never-ceasing remorse urged her onward and gave her no peace. What a strange thing was this remorse. People should be careful how they lightly committed sin, for this sorrow and penitence generally seized hold of them sooner or later. Ah! how sharp its sting, how strong its hold! It could take the colour from the cheek and the light from the eyes, and make one young in years seem as if stricken with age.

Ah! but surely that was only *unavailing* sorrow? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." What of those who, having done ill, repent and obtain from God forgiveness for the sin? Might they not walk happily afterwards, having given up the sin? Yes, surely. Did not the Bible say so?

"Marjorie."

John Weston's voice broke the stillness, and startled her out of her strange day dreaming. She lifted her eyes from the grass where she had seen so many things,

and glanced up into his loving, fearless eyes. He had risen to his feet and was standing before her, looking down on her uncovered brown hair, on her pale, fair face, into which a surprised colour had come. "Marjorie, you once refused to marry me. You know best why you did so, but I think you cared enough for me then to be my wife. Will you have me now, dear. I have waited, as I always intend to do until you say 'yes.' Say it now. You need care and attention, and I will not watch you fading away before my eyes. What is wrong with you, I don't know; but I think if you would marry me, I would give you such love and nursing that you would be obliged to grow strong and well, and happy again. Will you come to me and try, my dear?"

Marjorie shuddered. "What! live in this Manor Farm! No, I could never do it. That old woman, with her wrinkled, questioning face would be always before me."

"No, we would not live here," he answered eagerly. "There is a large farm ten miles from here in the midst of most beautiful scenery, and close to a wood; I can buy that and settle

there. Indeed, I have been saving for that purpose these years back, and now I have enough. It won't take me long to buy it and arrange it for you. You can send Nettie as much money as you like, and you can have our dear friend, Miss Macnab, to stay with us for months at a time. Now, my dearest, I am waiting for your 'yes'."

She listened to him in a charmed dream. Would she say "yes" and make him, and herself also, happy. Ah! no, how could she think of it for one moment. If she had refused him eight years ago, how much more reason was there for refusing him now? She rose up and stood beside him on the grass under the trees.

"Please, don't ask me again. I cannot marry you."

"But if Nettie is the only difficulty, that is easily overcome," he urged.

"No, I could not take your money for her. I must do all I can for her myself, until her talent renders her independent. Let us be friends still, but don't ask me that question again. Come in and look for Miss Macnab. She will think we have forgotten her, and she

wants to be home in time for her class-meeting. Come."

He gazed at her silently for a minute, then he raised her hat from the ground, handed it to her, and turned away in the direction of the house. He had waited eight years for her. He could wait another year. He supposed he must try and be content; that was all he could do at present.

"You are not angry with me?" she asked wistfully, as they neared the door where Miss Macnab stood awaiting them.

"Oh! no," he answered quietly. "You will give me another answer some day; you have thought for no one but Nettie at present. You are right to love her so much; yet I cannot see why you would not take your husband's money to help her.

"Oh! you cannot understand why no one must work for her but myself, and why I must try and place her in an independent position. If I could tell you—But, no; I must not tell any one the story of our life."

"I was wondering when you two were going to appear," cried the little spinster, as

they approached her. "You nearly forgot my meeting, John Weston."

"Well, you shall have the wagonette in a few minutes to make up for the delay, and I myself will drive you. Now, will not that atone?"

"Perhaps," she answered, as she looked anxiously at Marjorie's face. "The sun has made you paler than ever, child. Let us be going. I am afraid country air doesn't agree with you."

"Have tea here before you go, and then I can drop you at the door of the chapel," said John Weston, returning to them from the stables. "Tea will refresh you both, and the drive do you good then."

Miss Macnab gladly agreed to this, for she was just wishing for a cup of tea. When the meal was over, they drove in quickly through the fresh evening air and arrived in good time at the chapel door. Here John left them, and they entered the class-room, where some of the members were already assembled. Marjorie was dismayed when she found herself actually in the class-room. She had submitted to Miss Macnab's guidance without in

the least comprehending that she would find herself finally obliged to attend the class-meeting. She had been so disturbed by John Weston's unexpected proposal, although she had not appeared to be so, that she scarcely comprehended what had been arranged by her friend. Now she had no excuse to offer. She must remain and listen to the proceedings of the meeting. Perhaps even they would ask her to speak. Ah! no, she forgot that there was no formal speaking in this class. Well, that was some comfort.

Mr. Welsh gave out a hymn, which the members joined heartily in singing; then Mrs. West prayed.

"Now," said the minister, "we will read portions of the fifty-first Psalm together."

They all opened their Bibles, Marjorie reading out of one which a friend handed to her. How the words of that psalm were graven on her memory for many a day afterwards!—

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my

transgressions. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. . . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

Then ensued a conversation between all present, each taking part in it as she felt inclined, and one and another relating interesting and pleasant things in connection with the subject which the psalm had brought before them. But Marjorie said nothing. She sat and *seemed* to listen indeed; what she really heard was not their conversation. "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. . . . . Hide thy face from my sins, and

blot out all mine iniquities. . . . . Restore unto me the *joy* of thy salvation." One after the other those words slowly passed through her mind, and took hold of her, and hindered other sound from entering her ears in any intelligible fashion.

Oh! for the *joy* of His salvation! It was months since she had known it. Almost ever since she had come to Market Hawley that load of sin had lain upon her. It had taken the colour from her cheek, the gladness from her heart. She had not prayed one happy prayer for many and many a day. What was the use of praying to God for His blessing and help, when she knew she was daily doing that which was evil? She was a transgressor, indeed, and her way had been very hard. How could any one say that sin was pleasant? Why, it had weighed upon her like a nightmare. She was never free from the burden.

If she could but cast it off! If she could but make her confession, and give up doing the evil. The wages of sin are death, so how could she expect any good to come of it. No one could reap any benefit from such

wages. A little resolution; perhaps a few bitter tears; a hot blush of shame; the loss of the esteem and love of her friends. Yes, surely, all that, but then,—the *joy* of His Salvation.

The meeting broke up, and the several members went their different ways, Marjorie and Miss Macnab walking together.

"Will you not come in, my dear, and spend the remainder of the evening with me? We will be so glad to have you; Lion and Tiger are as much your friends as I am, you know."

Marjorie smiled faintly. Yes, Lion was indeed her friend.

"No, thank you; I cannot come to-night. I must go now to Mr. Absalom Marsh on business."

"Come into me after you have been with him." But Marjorie shook her head.

"Not to-night. Good-bye, dear friend. This will be the last kiss, perhaps, that you will ever give me."

She walked on up the main street, leaving Miss Macnab in a most perplexed and astonished condition.

'I m afraid she's going to be very ill," muttered the little spinster, with tears in her eyes. "I'll call in the first thing in the morning and see how she is."

Meanwhile, Marjorie walked steadily on until she reached the house which had "Mr. Absalom Marsh" engraved on a bright brass plate on its door. She lifted the heavy knocker and knocked.

CHAPTER XI.

MARJORIE'S CONFESSION.

"IS Mr. Marsh at home?"

"Yes'm," answered the maid who opened the door.

"Please show me into his study; I want to speak to him alone."

Mr. Absalom Marsh was busy over his account books when Marjorie was shown in.

"Ah! Miss Mowbray, how do you do? Allow me to hand you a chair. I am busy, you see, as usual. But this work is not so congenial as looking over the proof sheets of *Cleanliness*, or digging deep into the life of some great man like Addison. As you wished especially to see me, I suppose it is some business matter. Anything wrong with the school?"

Marjorie's heart sank within her for one brief second; then she gathered up what little courage she had, and spoke.

"I have come to make a confession to you, Mr. Marsh. Probably, after to-night you will not wish to see me in your house, but I cannot longer continue to deceive you and the parents of the school children. I am not a graduate of London University. You took it for granted that I was, because I came from London, and had such good testimonials to show to Mrs. Newton. I allowed you to deceive yourself and others. My testimonials are correct, and my attainments all that they say; but I have not been through any University course. I have never been happy since I deceived you. I have asked God to forgive me. I hope you will also forgive. Please, tell the children and their parents of my sin; or rather, I will do it myself. It would be only right for me to do so. Of course, I resign my post."

Mr. Marsh stared at her in the greatest astonishment.

"You have come to tell me you are not a University graduate?" he gasped.

'Even so," she answered, bowing her head, while her face grew paler, and her hands were clasped tremblingly in her lap.

He was silent, evidently thinking deeply over the startling, unexpected announcement.

"Ah! yes, I remember now quite well that I took it for granted you were from London University. In fact, it was my stupidity that tempted you to this sin."

"No, no," uttered Marjorie eagerly; "you had nothing to do with it. I was wicked, and I have repented every day of my life since then."

"Poor thing, poor thing! That is why you have been growing paler, and more delicate-looking every day. We have all been noticing it, and wondering what was the matter. Forgive you! of course I forgive you. I always thought you a fine woman, and I think you a finer woman now. Why, you know you might have gone on deceiving me, and I'd have been none the wiser. It must have been hard to confess such a thing openly. That requires grace, my dear; much grace. God must have poured it into your heart; He must, indeed, to have enabled you to confess

—'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' What a great word that 'cleanse' is! Holy Scripture uses it constantly. There, that is all right. No another word on the subject, my dear. Resign the school, indeed! No such thing. Why should you? I never had such a teacher. The children are well and happy, and learning to be upright, useful women; the mothers love you; we all esteem you. You are a godly woman, and that is the first thing in the world."

Marjorie listened with tear-filled eyes and an overflowing heart to the good man's words. Then, when he had ended, she rose up and bowed her lips on the hand he held out to her.

"*You* are good," she said brokenly; "not I."

"No, no; say no more about it."

To his extreme amazement, a large tear fell from his own eye down on to his hand. The dignified editor of *Cleanliness* weeping! The greatest man in the town showing such signs of emotion! Certainly not. He must not give way to such weakness.

"Now, then," he said briskly, "you must not talk of resigning the school. It may be a little difficult at first, but they all like you too well to think hardly of you. I'll tell you how we'll manage it. I'll call a meeting of the mothers and the children to-morrow, and I'll explain the thing to them. You can come also and say a few words to them. That will settle the matter at once."

So Marjorie went home with a lighter heart than she had known for many and many a day. Miss Macnab and Nettie had to be told yet, and it would be difficult to face the children and their parents and explain her deception; but still, how good God was! He had not only forgiven her Himself, but He had caused Mr. Marsh to forgive her, and to speak kind, reassuring words to her. Before she went to bed, she wrote a letter to Nettie, telling her of the deception and confession, and how she was going to retain the school after all. After that she laid her head on her pillow and slept peacefully.

The next morning Miss Macnab called quite early, before Marjorie's breakfast things were removed.

"Why, you are looking much better this morning. I declare, I feel quite relieved. You talked so strangely to me last night that I thought you were going to have a bad illness."

Marjorie rose and placed her friend on a chair, and stood before her.

"You must not talk any more to me until I have told you of my ill-doing. I have deceived you too, for you thought me a good woman, and I was a very wicked one." Then she made her confession, humbly and sadly, and waited for her friend's condemnatory words. Miss Macnab rose and put her arms round her and kissed her many times.

"I have nothing to forgive. You forget that I also am a woman. I love and respect you more than ever now, if that could be."

By-and-by Marjorie said: "You know now why I would never go to class-meeting. I would have been such a hypocrite had I gone with you and talked as you all did last night. I dared not do it."

Later on that same day, Marjorie told the mothers of her school-children, and the children themselves, that she was not a

London University graduate; that she had been deceiving them. Mr. Marsh also spoke to them, and assured them of his continued esteem for her, and confidence in her ability to teach his school. The result was that the mothers heartily agreed with Mr. Marsh, and the children thought that if they had told a lie like that they would never have confessed it; so Miss Mowbray must be a very brave as well as a very good woman. But she would, perhaps, be more strict than ever about little untruths and tiny deceptions, and make them confess all such trifles openly, even as she herself had done. They would require to be more careful than ever.

Nettie's answer to her sister's letter was received on the following day.

"I am sorry you have had such trouble on my account," wrote she. "When you had actually taught for so long in a false character, I don't see any sense in your confessing it and making such a bother about it. How foolish you were to make yourself so miserable about it. You might have grown ill, and then what would I have done. I couldn't have studied much longer for want of money, and I suppose

I'd have been obliged to go to Market Hawley to nurse you, which would have interfered with my work. Do be careful, dear. It would be a pity to spoil all my chances now. You always were rather fussy about trifles. I don't think I shall see you at Christmas. The eldest brother of my friend in Brighton has asked me to marry him. He is nice enough, but he is only an artist, and not a very lucky one either. However, when I go there at Christmas I will see about giving a decided answer one way or the other. You know him. What is your opinion?"

"Poor Nettie," murmured Marjorie to herself, as she closed the letter with a half sigh; "I don't think she loves this man very much, or she would not talk so calmly about giving him an answer. He is not the man I would have chosen for her; he is not half good enough for her. But there is time enough yet to think about it. Yes, I suppose I do seem fussy to her; but I couldn't live a hypocrite any longer even to serve her. She would scarcely comprehend what I have suffered, because she is so good and innocent herself. She would never have been tempted to act that lie."

Thus variously was Marjorie's confession received by her friends, and things went on much in the old way in the school and in the town. The colour came back to her cheeks and the light to her eyes, and she laughed and talked to Miss Macnab and to Lion and Tiger in a happy, light-hearted fashion good to see and hear. She scarcely seemed like the same woman. Now and again she looked grave when she thought of Nettie's future, and she saved all she could in order that she might be able to send larger cheques to London. She was gentler and more patient with the children, and she never punished them for a fault, except they were very hardened indeed. The first token of sorrow won from her an immediate pardon. No evil-doer in the town heard a harsh word from her lips. Where she had formerly censured she now tried to persuade lovingly. Surely had the joy of His salvation been restored to her, and she let others see it.

Miss Louisa Marsh and James Higgs still continued her enemies, and many a sharp, taunting word escaped their lips concerning her.

"Why, she has been a liar and a deceiver as long as we have known her," said Miss Louisa to her mother, one evening shortly after school re-opened in the autumn. "I was never deceived by her appearance of goodness. I always thought she was too much like a Puritan to be all good."

"No, you never cared for her, lovey; but don't let your Pa hear you say that. He thinks no end of her. Indeed, for myself, I wonder at her courage. She certainly did deceive your Pa, but she confessed it, and she offered to give up the school. They weren't easy things to do."

"You are soft-hearted, Ma. She thought it was the best thing she could do, and she was quite right. Oh! she's a cunning dame. I wouldn't be surprised if 'twas all got up for effect."

"Well, I don't think it was, exactly. You see she lost all her good looks, and she seemed really ill. Now, since it's all come out, she's wonderfully improved, She's as young again, and she has such a beautiful colour in her face."

"Well, I hope you haven't asked her to tea to-night to meet John Weston."

"Oh! no, but if your Pa had remembered to tell me to do it, I'd have been obliged to ask her. I don't bear her any ill-will, lovey; I don't indeed, poor girl; and, Louisa, dear—I wish you didn't."

"Oh! I don't bear her any ill-will at all, I assure you," answered Louisa loftily; "I only pity her. She must feel very uncomfortable when she thinks of the part she has played Me and Mary Simpson were just saying that to-day. I've written an article for the next week's *Cleanliness*, and I think I've given her a slight lesson in it. I hope some of those stupid workmen's wives will understand it and cease their sickening praises of her gentleness and sweetness, and such stuff. I know James Higgs takes the paper. Ah! good evening, Mr. Weston. We were just speaking of Miss Mowbray. I was pitying the poor thing for making such a spectacle of herself Of course, after having deceived us all so shamefully, the least she could do was to confess it."

"I can't say I pity her, Miss Marsh," said John Weston, calmly, as he shook hands with his hostess.

"What! not when she had to make such a humiliating confession? She goes about now with the knowledge that we are all aware she was acting a lie ever since she came amongst us."

"She was not *obliged* to make the confession," continued John Weston, still calmly. "I have thought of her courage with wonder and admiration. Now, let me put it to you, Miss Marsh. Could you or I have easily made such a confession? I don't believe I could."

"I hope I shall never be so wicked as to have such a thing to confess," answered Miss Louisa in indignation.

CHAPTER XII.

"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES."

ALTHOUGH the majority of the good folk of Market Hawley received Marjorie with even increased cordiality and respect, she was at times conscious that there were two or three people in the town, perhaps more, who looked upon her with contempt since her confession. Miss Marsh was one of these latter, and lawyer Simpson's daughters, friends of Miss Louisa's, also regarded her with a scarcely concealed contempt. She was not often brought into contact with these young ladies, but when they met her in the street they passed her with unseeing eyes. Mrs. Marsh seldom asked her to a "social gathering" now, for Louisa grew so indignant and contemptuous when her name was mentioned

that the good-natured woman was afraid she might be insulted by her wayward daughter.

Miss Marsh had some influence in the town, being the only daughter of the richest man in it, and this influence she now used to try and injure Marjorie. She began to visit the cottages of the labouring men, and to give their wives money and little presents of vegetables and fruit, and even of bread and meat. She found that she had too many dresses in her wardrobe: these she also gave to the women, with a gaudy tinsel trinket or two for the elder daughters. She asked them questions concerning the progress their children were making at the school, and openly expressed her sorrow at her father's infatuation in having a teacher for his school who had herself confessed that she was a liar. On some of the women her words took effect, but most of them retained their belief in Marjorie's goodness and cleverness. Indeed, the temporary sensation created by Marjorie's confession would have quite died out in a few weeks but for the strenuous efforts of Miss Marsh and a few of her friends.

Mr. Absalom Marsh had no idea of the

intense dislike felt by his daughter for Marjorie. He would not have believed it possible that any Christian could harbour ill-will in that way. Marjorie had deceived him,—yes. But she had acknowledged her deception and had offered to make every reparation in her power. She led a good, useful and blameless life before them all: then why should they condemn her? How would *they* all look if they announced publicly the lies, and the dishonest acts, and the petty meannesses of which they were guilty at times. And Mr. Welsh was an open admirer and friend of Miss Mowbray's, as was likewise John Weston, the rich owner of Westbrook, the new house, grounds and farm which he had just bought. But the fact that these two men were Marjorie's friends only added to Miss Marsh's feeling of angry resentment.

At this time Miss Louisa persuaded her mother to give a number of large tea parties, to which all the town was invited in turn, all except Marjorie. It was close upon Christmas: a good excuse was thus afforded for these entertainments. Miss Macnab was invited to one and another of them, but she

refused to go, for she found out that Marjorie was overlooked. Miss Macnab's refusals were a source of annoyance and regret to Louisa for the little spinster was a power in the town in her own way. She was rich, owned her very pretty house, had no relatives, was an intimate friend of the wealthiest unmarried man in the neighbourhood,—a man richer than Mr. Absalom Marsh himself,—and a woman who was feared by evil-doers and hypocrites for her energetic tongue and fearless, straightforward speech. Market Hawley usually deferred to her opinion, even when it laughed at her peculiarities. So, naturally Louisa was troubled when this desirable guest absolutely refused to put in an appearance at the entertainments. She knew the reason of the refusals, but that only made the matter worse. Of course Miss Macnab did not say in so many words that she would not go because her friend was not invited, but Miss Marsh, and Mrs. Marsh also, were well aware of the fact.

Mr. Absalom Marsh was very busy just then inventing a new kind of white soap which was to surpass anything of the sort

ever used. He felt it as a duty he owed to the town to do something of the sort. He was its benefactor and the greatest man in it ; therefore he must not repose idly on his laurels. What with watching the progress of his invention, and writing explanatory articles concerning it in *Cleanliness*, he had scant leisure for playing the part of host. His friends would excuse him, he felt sure, when they knew upon what an important work he was engaged. If he succeeded, he meant to write articles about it to the *Standard* and the *Times*, those great organs of public opinion in London, and thus bring Market Hawley into great notice.

One morning a note came for Marjorie just before she started for the school. It was from Mrs. Newton, announcing that she could for the future dispense with Miss Mowbray's services as instructor of her children. She did not think the children paid as much attention to their studies or as much respect to their teacher as formerly, and she thought it better to conclude the engagement. For her own part, she was sorry enough to be obliged to write such a note, but she did not

think it right, for the children's sakes, to act otherwise

Marjorie was amazed, and very much troubled at receiving this epistle. It would hurt her in more ways than one to lose this tuition. The children had been good enough, and attentive enough also. She had never detected any disrespect in their manner. Mrs. Newton had not discovered all this at the end of the summer holidays, when Marjorie quite expected to have been dismissed. Why had she changed now?

After school, Marjorie went in to Miss Macnab, and showed her the letter.

"I know I deserve it," she said humbly. "But when I was not dismissed before now, I thought Mrs. Newton was also going to allow me to atone for my ill-doing."

"My dear Marjorie, Mrs. Newton has been advised to do this thing," said Miss Macnab indignantly. "She has not strength of mind to do it of herself. When Mr. Absalom Marsh and the rest of us supported you, then she was quite contented with you; but Mr. Absalom Marsh's daughter intends to drive you out of the town, I'm afraid, and she

has used her influence with Mrs. Newton against you. The people don't know that Mr. Marsh is totally unaware of his daughter's conduct, but Mrs. Marsh knows of it, of course; and I must say I am very much disgusted with her weakness. Louisa makes her do good and ill at her pleasure, I do believe. If this sort of thing goes any farther, I'll try if I can't stop it."

"Please, don't trouble about it," returned Marjorie, anxiously; "I deserve it, and I only wonder I have not been obliged to leave the town long ago.

"Fiddlesticks! It's Miss Louisa Marsh who ought to leave the town. She's a disgrace to her womanhood, to say nothing of her Christianity. I declare I'll go to Mrs. Newton this very afternoon, and show her the truth of the whole matter. You see, my dear, she was invited to those parties given by Mrs. Marsh, and then Miss Louisa had her to herself. I'm sorry now I refused all those invitations. I might have done you more service by going; I might have watched Miss Louisa and listened to her, and said my say also. But, dear me, dear me, I'm awfully obstinate and blind

sometimes! Positively I can't see anything beyond my own four walls. I'll know better another time, I hope."

"But I wouldn't like Mrs. Newton to receive me back against her will."

"You want the money, and it's time we stopped all this wicked, uncharitable work," returned Miss Macnab, solemnly. "It has been going on for a long time now, but I thought it would never come to anything. Mr. Absalom Marsh is as simple and unsuspicious as a baby, with all his fine talk and imaginary wisdom. He would not suspect his daughter of such behaviour, because he believes everything belonging to him to be perfect. He will scarcely give serious attention to me when I open his eyes. He will receive a severe blow, I'm afraid, his pride will be so lowered."

"Don't say anything to him," entreated Marjorie. "Where would be the use of bringing unhappiness into his house? I know he is very proud of his daughter: why trouble him? And, after all, what has she done amiss? Many good Christians would treat me as she is doing. Few like to associate with a liar."

"Really, Marjorie, you make me angry with you. What sort of Christians did you live amongst before you came to Market Hawley? *No* good Christian would act as she is doing. Why, they *daren't* say their prayers if they did. How could *they* pray for forgiveness? 'Forgive us our trespasses,' indeed! No, no; hypocrites are not Christians. There is no medium path."

Marjorie could not talk any more on the subject just then, for she had a letter to write to Nettie. When she had written it she went out to post it, intending at the same time to walk a little distance along the road, for her head ached and she felt rather low-spirited. Miss Macnab came to her door as she passed it, asked her which way she was going, and said she and Lion would follow her in a few minutes.

Having posted her letter, she walked slowly onwards. It was not a very pleasant evening. The sun had set, and there was a sort of grey light, which was not darkness and yet was not light. The road was wet from recent rain, and the wind was beginning to rise steadily. Not a very inviting evening for a walk, cer-

tainly ; but Marjorie did not give much heed to physical discomfort. She was thinking how Nettie would miss the money from Mrs. Newton's tuition, and she was wondering what she would do if she really was obliged to leave Market Hawley. She might go back to London or she might try another small town, but where could she ever again be so comfortable as she was here. She would be so lonely in another place. Miss Macnab was a true friend, and most of the people had been kind to her. She shrank from beginning anew among strangers.

If she failed here altogether, Nettie would blame her for it, and no wonder. She had explained all the circumstances to her, but that could not alter the fact, or make the unpleasant truth any the pleasanter. Perhaps they would spend their Christmas together in London, after all ; for, if Mr. Absalom Marsh took the school from her, she could not remain more than a day after in Market Hawley.

"Ah ! Miss Mowbray, and so you're thinkin' it's time you was sorry for takin' my situation from me ! I agrees with you, Miss. How'll you like to have your situations took from

you? They're goin' fast, my dear. And so you cheated us all, did you? I said you wasn't fit to teach my innocent child, and I was right. None o' your palaverin' for me. Miss Marsh's the one for my money. That reminds me you owe me a lot o' money. All the time you was teachin' my child, we was payin' you, and, as Miss Marsh says, 'twas a waste o' our hard-earned coins, 'cause you couldn't teach her nothin'. You didn't know a thing yourself, and you wasn't nothin' but a cheater."

The speaker, James Higgs, advanced nearer to the astonished and frightened Marjorie, so that she could not escape from him. He had seen her passing along the road while he himself was concealed behind a tree trunk, and he had followed her some distance until he thought he would be safe from interruption; then he stopped her.

"Now, then," he continued, speaking in a low, threatening tone, "hand me over all the money you've got in your pocket, by way o' return for all we've spent on that child's schoolin'! Do you hear? Don't be long about it, neither. There's no one as'll take

your part this time, 'cause all the town's again' you. I'll give you while I'm havin' a sup o' this stuff to empty your pockets; then if 'tisn't done, I'll empty 'em myself. I mean to get drunk real bad on your money to-night. I'm a bit on the road now."

He raised a black bottle to his lips as he concluded, and swallowed a portion of its fiery contents, watching Marjorie all the while.

"I have no money with me," she said indignantly, as she in part recovered from her fright. "You are a coward to attack a woman. Go on your way and let me pass. I will call out for assistance."

"So you may, when I've emptied your pockets," he said, making a staggering movement forward and grasping her dress. She cried out sharply, and then the road seemed to swim round and round her.

CHAPTER XIII.

MISS LOUISA'S ENMITY MADE KNOWN.

'COURAGE, Marjorie, I am coming! I'll soon settle that cowardly creature.'

Higgs turned half stupidly round at the sound of those words, and unloosed his hold of Marjorie's dress. Then he felt himself clasped tightly round the knees. The next moment he was lying in the mud. Who had knocked him down? Not a man, for there was no man near; he could see that, drunk as he was. Not that dog Lion; there was no dog standing over him, with gleaming teeth ready to rend him. But who *was* standing over him? Why, little Miss Macnab, a huge stone held firmly in her hands.

"Now, then, if you at tempt to move from that, I'll drop this stone down on your head.

That will quiet you, I expect." Her eyes flashed such angry scorn over him that he believed he felt their fire scorch him.

"How dare you come attacking a good, gentle woman like Miss Mowbray, you great drunken coward! You're afraid to fight men, and you'd be afraid to fight *me;* but you annoy her because you know she won't even complain of your conduct. Bah! I waste time talking to a drunken thing like you. If I had a good stick, I'd beat you so that you'd remember it for many a day. Stir if you dare. You know I'm afraid of no man. I've no nice feeling of charity or humanity for such as you. Marjorie, dear, can't you get away home. Don't mind me. I'll wait till some one comes, and I'll have this creature locked up. Why, Marjorie, have you fainted? Dear, dear, what shall I do? Would you stir, you wretch? I'll drop this stone on you, surely."

She looked as if she would do so on the slightest provocation, or, indeed, without any provocation at all. Her whole frame was quivering with excited indignation. The man had sense enough to see that it was best to lie still. He knew her well, as did

many wife-beating factory men to their cost. She had once emptied a large pot of boiling water over a cobbler who had beaten his wife almost to death. That man did not "take the law o' her," as he threatened to do when his terrible wounds had healed, and he let his wife alone for many a day afterwards.

"If Lion were only here. Marjorie, can't you get up, dear. If I go to your assistance I must disable this wretch here Why did I send Lion on that errand? Ah! here he is! Lion, Lion, good fellow, come on quickly." The Newfoundland came racing on at a gallop, and reached his mistress' side panting for breath. When he perceived the man lying on the road, he looked down on him and uttered a growl. "Yes, Lion. Don't let him move from there till I tell you. What a relief!" And the little spinster dropped the huge stone, the weight of which had nearly dislocated her wrists.

"Miss Macnab and Miss Mowbray!" exclaimed the astonished voice of Mr. Absalom Marsh, as that important individual suddenly appeared round the corner of the road, driving

towards the town. "Why, what is the matter here?"

"Oh! Mr. Marsh, I am so glad to see you. Get down and lift Marjorie into your dogcart, and take her to my house quickly. I'll soon be after you, And send a policeman out to lock up this creature. Yes, that's the man Higgs. He attacked her here, and I arrived barely in time to save her."

Mr. Marsh soon jumped down and raised Marjorie in his arms, and placed her in the vacant seat in the dogcart. She opened her eyes then; the movement roused her.

"Oh! I am well now, thank you," she said, smilingly. "I can walk home. It is Miss Macnab who ought to drive. I'm sure she must be hurt."

"Not I, my dear; I'm all right, and somewhat cooler too," and she laughed heartily. "Lion will watch the man until the policeman arrives. I declare, the wretch has fallen into a drunken sleep. Well, he must be very drunk. Oh! we can leave him here safely with Lion."

Full of indignation, Mr. Marsh turned and looked down at Higgs; then some of the anger died out of his eyes

"I believe he has not many more days to live. Drink has killed him."

Miss Macnab hurried home after the dog-cart. She was in haste to get her dress off, the sleeve of it had come into such close contact with the drunken man's garments.

"Pah! dirty creature! I can never wear the dress again," she muttered, as she reached her own home. Marjorie was sitting at the great blazing fire in the parlour, waiting for her, but she did not stop to speak to her. She ran upstairs to her bedroom and changed her dress; then she tied up the discarded garment, and directed her maid to give it to some poor body. That done she entered the parlour and sat down placidly opposite Marjorie, and began to pour out tea.

"How did you knock him down?" questioned Marjorie, after a few minutes' quiet inspection of her hostess. "Did Lion do it?"

Miss Macnab laughed. "No; Lion was not with me at the first. I just rushed at him, clasped him closely round the knees, and threw him backwards. You must recollect he was drunk at the time, and taken unawares. I always work myself up to such a pitch of in-

dignation when I come upon any cowardly cruelty, that I often wonder I don't do more real harm to the wicked men. Generally speaking, my tongue is weapon enough, but sometimes I am obliged to resort to physical force, and I have always been victorious. Oh! you may laugh, but I have devices which make up for my lack of height and strength. I consider I have done a good evening's work," she continued complacently, as she leaned back in her comfortable arm-chair and sipped her tea. "Now we will have an end of Miss Louisa Marsh's persecution, and Mrs. Newton will be writing to beg you to continue teaching her children. I shall make everything plain to Mr. Absalom March. You needn't shake your head, my dear Marjorie. Are you not afraid to oppose such a formidable personage as Maria Macnab? Ah! here is Lion. Of course that man is safe in custody. Lion never half does his work. Well, good fellow! Do you want your supper?" The Newfoundland walked over and laid his head in her lap. She looked down lovingly into his great eyes, which beamed with affectionate intelligence.

"Lion, come here," said Marjorie softly. He turned and crossed the hearthrug, carefully avoiding stepping on Tiger, who was stretched at full length in the middle of it. She took his head in her hands and kissed him between his eyes. He moved his tail from side to side slowly, in an appreciative fashion; evidently he approved of Miss Mowbray's manner of saying "thank you." Then he lay down on the rug, somewhat disturbing Tiger as he did so, who resented this intrusion on his domain by laying his head on the Newfoundland's back and going off placidly to sleep again.

The next day the man Higgs died from the effects of all the intoxicating liquor he had been drinking for months back. Before he died he sent for Mr. Marsh, and told him that Miss Marsh's half-crown and angry words concerning Marjorie had been the beginning of the persecution against her. He said he had been incited to continue to annoy her in the hope of receiving further half-crowns, and also because Miss Marsh's words had taken a strong hold of his weak brain. He was sorry for his ill-doing, and he hoped Mr. Marsh

would not take the school from her, as had been rumoured in the town. Mrs. Newton had followed Miss Louisa's advice and dismissed Miss Mowbray, but he hoped the master would let her keep the school.

Mr. Absalom Marsh was utterly astounded at the revelations of Higgs. He went away from the man's bedside like one in a hideous nightmare. Could it be possible that a Marsh was capable of acting so basely? Was it really his daughter, his only and beloved child, who had displayed such uncharitableness, such an unchristian spirit? Was it really Louisa who had indulged in such absolute and active evil-doing? He could scarcely believe it. But a dying man had said so, and his wife, a good, truthful woman, had confirmed his words. All the town looked up to the Marsh family, and he, Mr. Absalom Marsh, had complacently accepted the homage. Was he not always thinking of them, and working to improve their mental and moral condition? He had endeavoured to live blamelessly before all men. Now, he could never hold up his head again.

He strode into his parlour where his wife

and daughter were sitting busily at work, and closed the door noisily behind him. They looked up quickly, startled at the noise. When Mrs. Marsh saw her husband's face she cried out:

"Absalom, are you ill? What is the matter, dear?"

"Matter!" he answered in a low voice. "Matter enough! We are disgraced for ever in the eyes of Market Hawley, and that wretched girl, our daughter, is the cause of it. Ah! you may well look ashamed and stricken, poor girl! How could you ever conceive such base plans? I have just heard from the dying lips of Higgs all about your persecution of Miss Mowbray. To think that such a scheme should have the sanction of my name! We may leave Market Hawley, I repeat. I can never face my neighbours again. Go to your room, wretched girl, and let me not see you for many a day. I don't think I shall ever want to see you again."

He sat down and laid his head on the table, while a groan of distress and anguish escaped his lips. His daughter, abashed and frightened, stole from the room, but Mrs. Marsh stood

beside him and timidly touched his head with her hand.

"I am as much to blame as Louisa, for I unthinkingly aided her by giving those parties. I thought it was just a girlish envy that made her not like Miss Mowbray. I believe Louisa began in that way, until her dislike got beyond her control. Oh! Absalom dear, forgive us both."

"I have prided myself on our integrity and uprightness; I have talked about godliness. My own child makes me out a hypocrite. I must go down this minute and apologize to Miss Mowbray, and try and explain to her how sorry I am."

"May I go with you, dear?" pleaded his wife, tearfully. "I am very grieved about my share in the matter; indeed I am."

He kissed her affectionately.

"Come, then, let us go," he answered.

Marjorie was dismayed when Mr. Absalom Marsh announced the object of their visit.

"You have always been my benefactor since first I came to the town," she said, heartily and sincerely. "Don't apologize to me for anything. As to Miss Marsh—as she

has so hurt you, I must plead to you for her forgiveness. It was not her fault that she couldn't like me. We do not like at will."

Mrs. Marsh hugged her with fervour for such words, but Mr. Marsh went home more incensed than ever against his daughter. When a few days had passed, and his mood did not change, Mrs. Marsh sent Louisa away on a visit to friends in another town, trusting to time and absence to soften her father's anger against her,

From the death of the man Higgs until Christmas Eve, the days passed quietly for Marjorie. On Christmas Eve Nettie came to Market Hawley, to spend a week of the holidays with her sister. Miss Macnab invited them both to eat their Christmas dinner with her, and Marjorie gladly accepted the invitation. On the evening of Christmas Day there was service in the Chapel. Marjorie went to it alone, Miss Macnab remaining with Nettie, who caught a cold in travelling down from London. When she returned, after an hour's absence, Nettie stared at her.

"Is it so very cold, out of doors? You look so ghastly."

"For all the world as if she had seen the Wandering Jew," spoke Miss Macnab, laughingly.

"I have seen her," answered Marjorie, quietly, but with trembling lips.

CHAPTER XIV.

MARJORIE'S STORY.

"WHO is the wandering Jew?" queried Nettie, in much curiosity. She could not remember ever to have seen such a look on her sister's face as she saw then.

She is our mystery," answered Miss Macnab, rising and forcing Marjorie to sit down. "Why, dear, what has happened to you?"

"As I said, I saw the little old woman you call the Wandering Jew. She was standing outside the Chapel door with John Weston, and she spoke to me. She said, 'Marjorie, but I did not wait to answer her."

"She called you Marjorie!" exclaimed both Miss Macnab and Nettie at once.

Yes, she called me Marjorie. She had an

eager, entreating look in her eyes, and her face is old and care-worn; but I turned away from her. Why should I heed her now? She had no pity fifteen years ago." Marjorie spoke in a strange, mechanical fashion, as if scarce knowing what she was saying.

"I am sure you are ill, dear," said Miss Macnab, soothingly. "You have not quite recovered from yesterday's headache.

"Oh! no, I am not ill; but it gave me a shock to see her again. I had been trying to forget all about her, but she won't let me. I don't want to have anything to do with her. I have not interfered with her. Why does she trouble me?"

"What has she to do with you?" cried Nettie, impatiently. "Tell us all about it quickly. How is it that you have a secret which I know nothing about?"

"Yes, it does concern you. I suppose I ought to have told you long ago, but there was no use in telling you, and vain dreams might have injured your progress in your art."

"I declare, one would think I was a baby, to hear you speak," said Nettie, with a sudden

angry petulance. "Tell me now, at any rate."

"Gently, Miss Nettie," spoke Miss Macnab, almost reprovingly. "You must not trouble your sister until she is ready to speak. You may be sure that whatever she has done, was done for your good, seeing she has no other thought."

"I don't know," said Marjorie, wearily; "I have wondered if I did well in taking Nettie away. She was but an infant. Yes, I will tell you about it all. Don't go away, Miss Macnab. It is no longer a secret. You told me something of the mystery of the Manor House, but I can tell you the true story. Years ago, I lived there with my father and mother. I loved my mother, but knew very little about my father. Well, one day, Nettie was born, and my mother died. Within six months of her death, my father married the housekeeper, a woman I had never liked. She had lived with us six years, and mother had liked her well enough. She was harsh, cunning, and very fond of money. Well, our father died six months after his second marriage. It was found that he had made a new will, leaving everything to his second

wife, to do as she wished with. There was no provision made for us, except that our step-mother was to educate us, and always give us a home in the Manor House. Even after her death, the money was not to come to us if she did not make a will in our favour. She said she would leave it all to some hospital, and she always treated me most unkindly. She was good enough to Nettie, but then the child was only a baby, and had never angered her. Long ago, when she came to us as housekeeper, I had found her out in some dishonesty, and told my mother about it. My mother reproved her, but forgave her. She never forgot that childish act of mine, and I suppose she determined to punish me for it. One night, when Nettie was about three years old, she had been most cruel to me. I felt I could bear it no longer. I resolved to leave the Manor House, and never return to it. So I took Nettie, and went away without telling any one of my intention. I had two hundred pounds of my own in a little money box, which had been a gift to me from my dead grandmother. This I brought with me, and a small bag with

clothes. I went first to two ladies with whom I had been at school in my mother's life-time. They helped me with their advice, and after a while, I got on very well with teaching. I had promised my mother to be a mother to Nettie, and I have tried to be so. I never heard of my step-mother from that night, more than fifteen years ago, until I came here to teach Mrs. Newton's children. You remember, Miss Macnab, you told me about the Manor House mystery, and how Mrs. Ashton was like the Wandering Jew. I was surprised to find that she still lived, but I trusted that time had changed me beyond her recognition, and I was certain she could not possibly know Nettie. Then, also, you told me she was always moving about, so I determined to remain and retain my good tuitions. If she ever came to the Manor House while I was in Market Hawley, I resolved to keep indoors until she departed again, so that there might be no chance of a recognition. But one night I saw her standing at the Manor House gate. She could not have really remembered me, for although she called out to me to stop, she

made no enquiries in the town about me, that I ever heard. The night was a dark one, and very likely she did not see me distinctly. To-night, leaving the Chapel, I saw her once again. She was standing at the door, talking to John Weston. She looked me full in the face, and cried out, 'Marjorie!' I turned my back on her, and walked away quietly. I didn't run, for fear of attracting attention. When she called my name, John Weston put his hand on her arm, as if to prevent her following me. He was her agent, you know, before he bought Westbrook. But she knows I am here now; he will have told her all about me."

Marjorie ceased speaking, and put her hand to her head in a dazed fashion. Her hearers were silent for a minute also, recovering from the astonishment her words caused.

"How is it that no one in the town recognized you, when you had lived so near it?" asked Miss Macnab at length.

"I don't think I ever walked in the town. I never left our own grounds except to go to school, and then my mother and I drove

in a covered car. My father was very peculiar in many respects. After his death I used to attend to Nettie all day long, and then I never by any chance left the grounds. I did not go to church or chapel, except when I was at school. Mother used to go sometimes alone, but father never went."

"I don't think you were quite right in rushing off that way," said Nettie then. "Our stepmother might have relented and left us our father's money after all. I was only a child. I had never annoyed her. I think you might have left me behind."

"She would never have left you the money," said Marjorie gently. "She hated you too, because she hated mother."

"Who knows? And we really own all the Manor House property, and I have been working hard for my living all this long time."

"You mean Marjorie has been working hard to support you, so that you might learn painting," put in Miss Macnab sharply.

"You kept this secret from me all these years, as if I had no right to know it," continued Nettie, unheeding Miss Macnab.

"You ought to have left me behind, Marjorie; you ought indeed. I was little more than a baby, and she would have been obliged to take care of me."

"I was afraid to leave you, my darling. She hated us so much that she might have done you some harm, and then how could I have met the mother in heaven? Have I not been a good sister to you, dear?" Marjorie knelt down by Nettie's side, and put her arms round her coaxingly. "I have tried to fill our mother's place. Kiss me, dear, and say I have done my best."

Nettie half reluctantly gave the kiss, while a frown rested on her fair face.

"At any rate you might have stopped and spoken to her to-night. Perhaps, she meant to ask you to make friends with her. Now, you have lost the opportunity."

A shadow of pain crossed Marjorie's face.

"Really, Miss Nettie, I must ask you not to talk such selfish rubbish," said Miss Macnab, in real indignation then. "Marjorie had no other course to pursue, and she did everything just right. She was wrong about you in one thing, though. She ought

to have let you earn your own living when you were able to do it. I don't believe in idleness and luxury at the expense of another. It is apt to spoil one's character. It has done yours no good, I can see."

Nettie was totally unaccustomed to reproof, and she might have replied angrily to Miss Macnab, but she was rather afraid of the little spinster's tongue; so she kept a sulky silence, and looked now and again at Marjorie's downcast face.

"Now, Marjorie, don't trouble yourself any more about the matter. Your stepmother recognized you, you say; so if she wants you she can send for you by John Weston. And if she does send for you, act just as you think fit. What a white face, my dear. You must go and have a rest in bed. The school business is nothing to this. I can't have you ill again, as with all this excitement you surely will be, if you don't take care. You shall stay here, and Miss Nettie can go into your lodgings."

"Then, I suppose, Mowbray is not our real name," said Nettie, as she rose to put on her jacket and hat. She had no desire to remain for the night with Miss Macnab

"Yes, it is," answered Marjorie, rising also. "Just before you were born our father, whose name was John Mowbray, became heir to a large sum of money on condition that he assumed the name of Ashton, his mother's family name. This, of course, he did, but I had such a dislike to Mrs. Ashton, our step-mother, that I retained our old name when I fled from the Manor House, rather than be known by the one she bore."

"Evidently the Market Hawley folk were ignorant of the real story of the Manor House mystery, for your father was always spoken of as John Ashton."

"Very likely," returned Marjorie. "But we must say good night, Miss Macnab. I'm afraid I have spoiled your Christmas evening by my strange story."

"Certainly not. I am very much interested and excited over it. But, you are not going, Marjorie?"

"Yes, I must. Nettie will be lonely in there, and besides, there is no reason why I should stay with you and trouble you to prepare a bedroom for me."

"Why, here is John Weston?" exclaimed

the little spinster eagerly, as she turned to the young man, who had just opened the parlour door and entered. Marjorie quickly sank down upon the nearest chair, and looked at him appealingly. He went to her and took her hand.

"She has sent to implore that you will come to her," he said, in answer to that look. "She has told me her story. She is very repentent, Marjorie, dear. You cannot refuse to hear what she has to say. She has been repenting for more than fifteen years, and she is dying now. Won't you come to her? Whether you come or not, all the money and property is yours and your sister's. She made a will leaving it all to you."

"I don't want it," answered Marjorie slowly.

"Go, Marjorie, and don't be so unrelenting," said Nettie quickly. "May I not come also?"

"Yes, of course. You have as much right to go as I have," returned Marjorie sadly. She rose then, and Miss Macnab wrapped her up warmly for the cold drive, kissing her the while, and whispering softly:

"Forgive us our trespasses,—May all good

influences from our home in Heaven be with you, and about you, dear."

John Weston drove the sisters rapidly along the dark, muddy road. It was not long until the vehicle passed through the iron gate, between the black goats' heads, and the red light from the lamps illuminated the entrance way. There was no old woman standing there now, leaning on her stick and gazing up and down the road with eager, expectant gaze. She had concluded her quest. She had at last been successful, after wandering to and fro for so many years. Yes, she might perhaps rest now, for she was sitting in her armchair waiting for death.

When Marjorie entered the room the worn hands trembled, and the dim eyes were raised for a moment.

"Did you come to me, Marjorie, after all? I robbed your mother many times,—I stole your inheritance from you—I spoiled your life when you should have just been entering happily upon it. Can you say you forgive me?"

CHAPTER XV.

THE END OF THE MYSTERY.

THE broken, gasping sentences ceased. The old woman sank back again upon her pillows, but her trembling hand was stretched out still, as if in mute appeal. Marjorie knelt down by the side of the chair, and clasped that trembling hand closely in her own.

"I do forgive you, fully and freely," she answered gently, and then she leaned over and kissed the brow of her father's wife—of the woman who had driven her out from her home, and treated her so cruelly years ago.

There was silence in the room for a minute; then the low, quavering voice began again:

"When you had gone, Marjorie, and taken the child, your sister, with you, I was startled. I did not think you would really run away. I wanted you to stay, so that I might taunt you day by day, and annoy you, and break your spirit.—I never meant to leave you or your sister a penny of your father's money—I wanted to hold it as a threat over your head, that in the hope of sometime obtaining it for yourself and Nettie you would submit to my cruelty.—When you fled all my plans were overthrown. —My pleasure was taken from me. I could not now watch your daily torture, and finally crown it all by leaving your money to some institution.—True, I could still leave the money as I wished, but half the pleasure was gone when I could not witness your defeat. I meant to have given it all away during my lifetime, and before your eyes, retaining the Manor House only until my death.—I knew you would not marry or try to help yourself in any way until Nettie was grown up.—Her mother had left her to you, and such was your disposition.—But when you fled I was totally dismayed.—And you had taken the child also, so that I had no rod to hold over you.—The

day after you had gone, I went into the town and made inquiries about you, but you had not been seen there. On my way home I was stopped by a crowd surrounding a street preacher. Before I could get the horse through the people, some words from the preacher fell upon my ears; words that in one moment seemed to show me clearly the wickedness, the enormous wickedness, of my conduct to you.—I hastened home, and sat down in the dining-room and thought it all out.—Then I fell upon my knees and tried to pray for forgiveness.—Ever since then I have been searching for you.—Oh! I have indeed repented."

Hot tears flowed slowly down the old woman's withered cheeks, and her breath came and went in hurried, fitful gasps.

"Say no more," said Marjorie, softly; "you will only distress yourself needlessly. Let it all be forgotten now."

"Nay, I cannot hurt myself much, and the end will soon be. I am not so afraid to die now, for you have forgiven me. I had a vague hope that if I could find you, and atone in part for what I had done, you would forgive

me, but I never could discover anything about you. I put advertisements into the papers, and I travelled great distances, following some false clue. I didn't dare to obtain the help of the police, for I was afraid they would put me into prison for ill-treating you, and then I should never find you. You know I was an ignorant woman, and understood nothing of law.—Your father's will in my favour was correct ; that was all I was certain about.—Never have I had a moment's peace since you fled.—Oh ! I have surely atoned."

"I did not see any of your advertisements," faltered Marjorie. "If I had, I might have returned, for Nettie's sake. I thought you would have been only too glad to get rid of us. I heard nothing more of you until I came here. Then I heard that it was supposed you were always searching for us, but I scarcely gave the story a thought. I hoped it was not true, for why should you want us back again in the Manor House when you had hated us so? I had dropped you out of my life ; that is why I never saw your advertisements, and gave no heed to the stories in Market Hawley about your wanderings."

"Ah! no, how should you believe them, indeed? One night, the last time I was here, I saw someone I took to be you, standing in the road looking at me. I called you, but you disappeared. The next morning I had a letter saying that it was more than likely you were in a town in Scotland, named Dunoon. The letter was from a friend, so I hurried away, and forgot all about the vision I had seen on the road. But at last I have found you, and you have forgiven me. Is that Nettie standing there? Come here and let me look at you. Yes, you are like your father; Marjorie takes after her mother. Ah! well, the end is near now, and I am so tired of my wanderings.—I used to picture you, Marjorie, a young girl, trying to support yourself and your baby sister, while I had your money and your home. It was your leaving your home and taking the child that awakened any good in me; that startled me out of my wickedness; and that preacher's words showed me my sin in the sight of God.—Perhaps I will now die in peace. I have prayed for forgiveness, and I have tried to atone. John Weston has told you that your father's home and money are

now yours and your sister's. He is a good man, Marjorie. He deserves your love."

Here the faint, weak utterances ceased ; the heavy lids drooped over the dim eyes, into which the shadow of death was already creeping.

Marjorie sent Nettie away to sleep, and she herself, with John Weston, remained in the death chamber. In the grey dawn of the morning the old woman passed peacefully away ; her wanderings for ever over, her restless, unquiet heart quiet and at rest at last.

There was no longer the Manor House mystery to form an interesting topic of conversation in Market Hawley when ordinary subjects failed, but the explanation of the mystery was wonderful enough to excite the good folk for many a day afterward. To think that Mr. Absalom Marsh's schoolmistress should be a rich heiress, almost as great a person as Mr. Marsh himself! Well she deserved her prosperity. She was a good woman ; she had worked to support that pretty sister of hers, and she had tried to do well by the school, and by the poor people of Market Hawley. Yes, and no doubt she

would still serve Market Hawley, for she would now live in the Manor House, and give entertainments, and employ labour, and spend her money in the town.

Mr. Marsh would have to get a new teacher for his school, and she might not be so kind and successful as Miss Mowbray was. Never mind. All's well that ends well. There would be a tenant at last in the Manor House.

So talked the people, much to the amusement of Miss Macnab. She knew a little more than they did. For instance—Marjorie had promised to marry John Weston directly, and go and live with him at Westbrook. Nettie and her artist-husband were to have the Manor House and the greatest part of old John Ashton's money. Marjorie had no need of money or lands, for her husband had enough ; and besides, by giving Nettie almost all the money and all the property, she hoped to make up for keeping it from her so long. Miss Macnab remarked that that was an absurd idea, for Mrs. Ashton had distinctly said she would never have given either Marjorie or Nettie a penny of their father's money had not Marjorie fled from her home and

taken her sister with her. But Marjorie persisted that her stepmother might have relented when Nettie grew to be a pretty, engaging child, so there must be some compensation made to her for her possible loss. Nettie herself had no objection to the arrangement, only she found the Manor House rather quiet and dull after London and Brighton. True, she filled it with her London friends, and by-and-by she had her husband with her, but somehow the place was not so gay nor so cheerful, and not nearly so pretty, as Westbrook.

* * * *

Some time after the death of Mrs. Ashton, Marjorie gave a large Harvest-Home party in Westbrook to a number of her Market Hawley friends. Miss Macnab was staying at Westbrook at the time. She often stayed with Marjorie and John Weston, and she was always accompanied by Lion. She remarked more than once to Mr. Absalom Marsh and others after Marjorie's marriage, that the happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Weston tempted her to believe that comfort and peace might be compatible with the marriage state, after all. And she sometimes asked Marjorie, with a

quiet smile, if she envied her still, and if she thought that the life of an unmarried woman was happier than that of a married one. She and Lion stood now on the terrace in front of the house, talking to Marjorie and John, and awaiting with them the arrival of their guests for the Harvest-Home.

"Is Miss Louisa coming with her father and mother to-night?" she asked of Marjorie, as she looked out with a pleasant smile over the smooth green, tree-shaded lawn, and the many beds of flowers still gay with some lingering summer blossoms.

"Yes, she accepted our invitation at once. I believe she has forgotten her dislike to me."

"I should think she has, indeed," returned the little spinster, almost indignantly.

"Well, I'm glad she is coming, and that she and her good father are friends again," said Marjorie, placidly. "She writes the lighter portion of *Cleanliness* for him as usual, and I think he has quite forgiven her for the pain she caused him."

"Did you hear that Mr. Absalom Marsh received some highly commendatory letters fro n London concerning that wonderful new

soap he made some time ago?" asked John Weston, as he fastened a large bunch of red flowers in the breast of his wife's dress, and then drew her hand through his arm.

"No; tell us of it," said she, smilingly.

"Well, he wrote to the *Times* and to the *Standard* about it, and he gave both papers a sketch of Market Hawley and its working people. They were great letters as to length and words, as befitted the editor of *Cleanliness*, and he, of course, requested a favourable notice in their columns of the soap and the paper. He obtained what he desired, and what was more to the point still, two London houses sent large orders for the soap. He is jubilant over his success."

"He well deserves it," answered Marjorie, quickly, and Miss Macnab heartily agreed with her.

"You can tell him so, then, for here he comes with his wife and daughter."

THE END.

Bemrose & Sons,
Printers,
23, Old Bailey, London, E.C.
and Derby.

Books, &c., Published by the W.M.S.S. Union.

Depôt—2, LUDGATE CIRCUS BUILDINGS, E.C. Hours: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

☞ *Copies of any Works named in the Lists and Catalogues of the Union will be forwarded to order on receipt of their value at published price.*

Orders and remittances should be sent to MR. BINNS, *Assistant Secretary.*

Two Saxon Maidens. By ELIZA KERR. Illustrated by GUNSTON. Cloth gilt, gilt edges, **3s. 6d.**

"Gracefully-written tales, and possessing deep interest in the picture they present of the struggle between heathendom and Christianity in the eighth and ninth centuries."—*Daily Chronicle.*
"Miss Kerr has treated the subject in a very attractive manner."—*Christian World.*

Melissa's Victory. By ASHTON NEILL. Illustrated by GUNSTON. Crown 8vo., Cloth gilt, gilt edges, **3s. 6d.**

"A tale of conversion to the Methodist Connnexion, and very well written."—*Times.*
"A special feature is the illustrations. . . . They are very effective, and serve to illustrate a story which is well told and adapted for usefulness in Christian homes."—*Christian.*

Pleasant Talks about Jesus. By J. COLWELL. Cr. 8vo., Cloth gilt, **2s. 6d.**

"The contents are very good indeed, and will be very helpful to mothers who are striving to bring up their children in the love of God and of Christ."—*Church Bells.*
"Told in a singularly interesting way. Children will be delighted with the book."—*Graphic.*

Two Snowy Christmas Eves. By ELIZA KERR. Illustrated by Gunston. Royal 16mo. Cloth gilt, gilt edges, **2s.**

The Secret of Ashton Manor House. By ELIZA KERR. Cr. 8vo. Clth. gilt, **2s.**

"The way of transgressors is hard."—PROV. xiii. 15. "But the path of the just is as the shining light. that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—PROV. iv. 18.

The Mystery of Grange Drayton. By ELIZA KERR. Cr. 8vo. Clth. gilt, **2s.**

"An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered."—PROV. xi. 9.

Kilkee. A Story of Village Life on the West Coast of Ireland. By ELIZA KERR. **2s.**

"The book is full of picturesque incident and picturesque pieces. It should find a place in every parochial and Sunday-school library."—*Church Review.*

Luther Miller's Ambition. By LILLIE MONTFORT. Illustrated. **1s. 6d.**

". . . Characterised by something better than genius, and that is goodness. Its lessons, however, are conveyed in a way that will make them tell."—*Methodist Recorder.*

Broken Purposes. By LILLIE MONTFORT. New Edition, Cloth gilt, **1s. 6d.**

The River Singers. By WILLIAM ROBSON. Cloth gilt, **1s. 6d.**

"A simple, touching little story, in which the troubles of a poor child are skilfully portrayed."—*Rock.*
"It is a story which is sure to be found attractive, and can be cordially recommended."—*John Bull.*

The Meadow Daisy. By LILLIE MONTFORT. Illustrated. Cloth gilt, **1s.**

Anecdotal Illustrations of St. Mark, 1s.

Philip Phillips: The Story of his Life. Illustrated. **6d.**

London: 2, Ludgate Circus Buildings, E.C.; 2, Castle Street, City Road, E.C.

☞ Special attention is invited to the following Series of Registers, &c., which have been prepared to meet the requirements of the Connexional Schedule, and will secure records of Attendance and Work—Systematic, complete, and easy for reference, at a minimum of labour:—

THE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTERS AND RECORDS.

Printed on Superior Paper in Blue Ink, Stitched and Bound in the Best Style.

Scholars' Roll of Attendance (30 Names—15 years: *or*, 90 Names—5 years; 15o Names—3 years; 450 Names—1 year, &c.) **3s.**

N.B.—This Roll provides for all necessary entries at admission, and answers all the purposes of an Admission Register, as well as an Attendance Roll.

Teachers' Roll of Attendance (30 Names—15 years *or*, 90 Names—5 years; 15o Names—3 years; 450—1 year, &c.) **3s.**

Register of Class Attendances (Any number of Classes up to 30, 15 years: *or*, 30 to 60 Classes, 7½ years; 60 to 90, 5 years, &c.) **3s.**

Summary and Journal (For Ten Years) ... ... **3s.**

Superintendent's Register (A Teachers' Roll, Register of Class Attendances, and Summary and Journal in one volume) .. ... **6s.**

Treasurer's Accounts Book (For Ten Years) ... ... **3s.**

Secretary's Minute Book (Pages Numbered, etc.) ... ... **3s.**

Librarian's Register ... ... **3s.**

Library Book Label, per 100 **6d.** **Reader's Library Card** per 100 **2s.**

Also—

Notice Forms (Adapted for Committee or Teachers' Meetings) per 100 **2s.**

Principles on which W. M. Sunday-Schools should be Conducted **1d.**, per 100 **4s.**

Register of Attendance, Lessons, and Marks (30 Names for Ten Years) **3s.**

Class Register of Attendance and Subscriptions (20 Names for Ten Years) **2s. 6d.**

CLASS REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE & SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Annual. Cloth Covers on Stout Boards, **4d.**

"STAR" REGISTER, Cloth-covered Card, **1d.**; per 100, **8s.**

Name of School, &c., printed, **1s. 6d.** per 100 *net* extra.

Stamps, Pads, and Ink complete, **6s.**; or, **2s.** for each Stamp, Pad, and Ink.

"Star" Certificates of Good Marks:

First Class, per doz., **9d.**; per 100, **6s.** | Second Class, per doz., **6d.**; per 100, **4s.**

Name of School, &c. printed, **1s. 6d.** per 100 *net* extra.

These are Ornamental Cards for use as Periodical Certificates (Month, Quarter, or Year).

Electro Silver Star for Prize Scholars, **1s.** *net*; per doz., **10s.** *net*.

NEW ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATE: 17 in. by 12 in. Special Design including a View of Jerusalem, **1s.**; per doz., **11s. 0d.**

Also—

New Certificate, No. 1, 13 in. by 10¼ in., **6d.**; per doz., **5s. 6d.**

New Certificate, No. 2, 11¾ in. by 8¼ in., **4d.**; per doz., **3s. 8d.**

New Certificate, No. 3, 8⅝ in. by 11¼ in., **2d.**; per doz. **1s. 10d.**

☞ Small Surplus Stock of a Certificate, 6 in. by 4 in., per doz., **8d.** *net*.

NEW REWARD LABEL, No. 2—5½ by 4 in., doz., **7½d.**; per 100, **5s.**

Also—

Reward Label, No. 1—4 by 2¾ in., per doz., **4½d.**; per 100, **3s.**

Reward Label, No. 3—6 by 4½ in., per doz., **9d.**; per 100, **6s.**

Reward Label, No. 4—5 by 3½ in., per doz., **7½d.**; per 100, **5s.**

Reward Label, No. 5—4½ by 3 in., per doz., **2d.**; per 100, **1s. 4d.**

Nos. 1 to 4 of the above are ornamental designs in colours, No. 5 is red and black only.

All the labels are printed on gummed paper.

THE METHODIST SUNDAY-SCHOOL HYMN & TUNE-BOOK.

(The Hymns printed in full with their appointed Tunes.)

The pages of the Scholars' Editions are reductions from the larger book, produced by photo-zinc process.

EDITIONS, BINDINGS, AND PRICES:—

All the prices are subject to the Union discounts, and the book may be included in Grant Orders.

YY Staff.

Organ & Choir Edition:

		s.	d.
361	Cloth; red edges -	6	0
362	Cloth extra, gilt edges, bevelled boards - -	8	0
363	Half Persian, marbled edges - -	10	0
364	Persian calf, grained gilt edges - -	12	0
365	Morocco, red under solid gilt edges -	16	0

CC Staff.

Scholars' Edition:

		s.	d.
371	Cloth, red edges -	1	6
372	Roan, limp, gilt edg.	2	6
373	Persian calf, grained	4	0
374	Morocco, gilt edges -	6	0
375	Morocco, ex., red gilt	8	0

CC Sol-fa.

Scholars' Edition:

		s.	d.
381	Cloth, red edges -	1	6
382	Roan, limp, gilt edg	2	6
383	Persian calf, grained	4	0
384	Morocco, gilt edges -	6	0
385	Morocco, ex., red gilt	8	0

DD Staff.

Combined Medium 16mo.

The M. S. S. H. & T. Book and Wesley's Hymns:—

		s.	d.
391	Cloth, red edges	2	6
392	Roan, limp, gilt edg.	4	0
393	Persian calf, grained	6	0
394	Morocco, gilt edges -	8	0
395	Do. ant. red gilt solid	12	0

DD Sol-fa.

Combined Medium 16mo.

The M. S. S. H. & T. Book and Wesley's Hymns:—

		s.	d.
401	Cloth, red edges -	2	6
402	Roan, limp, gilt edg.	4	0
403	Persian calf, grained	6	0
404	Morocco, gilt edges -	8	0
405	Do. ant. red gilt solid	12	0

The Hymn-Book and Tune-Book may also be had separately as under:—

The Methodist Sunday-School Hymn-Book.

EE.—Octavo Edition:

			s.	d.
108	Cloth, gilt edges - - -	at	2	6
109	Persian calf, gilt edges, &c. -	,,	5	0

AA.—Pearl 24mo Edition:—

			s.	d.
100	Limp cloth - - - - -	,,	0	4
101	Cloth, red edges - - -	,,	0	6
102	Superior cloth, gilt edges -	,,	0	9

BB.—Royal 32mo Edition:—

			s.	d.
105	Cloth, red edges - - -	,,	0	9
106	Superior cloth, gilt edges -	,,	1	0

N.—Combined 24mo—Wesley's Hymns and the M. S. S. H. Book.

			s.	d.
351	Cloth, red edges - - -	at	1	0
352	Superior cloth, gilt edges -	,,	1	4
353	Limp roan, gilt edges - -	,,	1	8
354	Coloured roan, gilt edges -	,,	2	6
355	Imitation ivory, rims & clasps	,,	3	0
356	Persian calf, gilt edges - -	,,	3	0
357	Persian calf, ex. gilt, gilt edges	,,	3	6
358	Persian clf., gilt edg., lp. circuit	,,	3	6
359	Morocco, gilt edges - -	,,	4	6
360	Morocco, antique, red under gilt	,,	5	6

The Methodist Sunday-School Tune-Book.

XX.—Staff Notation:—

			s.	d.
331	Limp cloth, red edges - -	at	2	6
332	Cloth boards ,, - -	,,	3	0
333	Cloth, bev. boards, red edges, gilt	,,	4	0
334	Limp roan ,, ,,	,,	5	6
335	Persian clf., bev. boards ,, ,,	,,	7	6
336	Limp Morocco ,, ,,	,,	10	6
337	Morocco, bev. boards ,, ,,	,,	12	6
338	Calf, soft cushion ,, ,,	,,	12	6
339	Morocco, antique ,, ,,	,,	16	0

ZZ.—Tonic Sol-fa:—

			s.	d.
341	Limp cloth, red edges - -	at	2	6
342	Cloth, boards ,, - -	,,	3	0
343	Cloth, bev. boards, red edges, gilt	,,	4	0
344	Limp roan ,, ,,	,,	5	6
345	Persian clf., bev. boards ,, ,,	,,	7	6
346	Limp Morocco ,, ,, ,,	,,	10	6
347	Morocco, bev. ,, ,, ,,	,,	12	6
348	Calf, soft cushion ,, ,, ,,	,,	12	6
349	Morocco, antique ,, ,, ,,	,,	16	0

SPIRITUAL SONGS.

Music in both Notations on the same leaf—Single Songs 1½d. per doz.; 8d. per 100 (10d. Assorted).

1 The Trumpet Call
2 Jesus, I love Thee
3 Love one another
4 Jesus reigns
5 All to Christ I owe
6 Consecration
7 Father, take my hand
8 I will, My child
9 It can be done
10 Jesu's Name
11 Jesus only
12 The Lord will provide
13 Not my will, Lord, but Thine
14 Out of the mire
15 Fierce were the wild waves
16 Scatter Seeds of Kindness
17 Hymn of Praise
18 Sabbath Bells
19 Hold the Fort
20 Let me go
21 There is a happy land—(original melody)
22 O, sing of His mighty Love
23 Safe within the Veil
24 Hymn for Nightfall
25 That will be heaven for me
26 Jewels
27 Sound the Battle-cry
28 Tell me the old, old Story
29 I love to tell the Story
30 The March of Life
31 I'm kneeling, Lord
32 Wake the Song of Joy and Gladness
33 Knocking, knocking
34 Christian Battle Hymn
35 The Precious Name
36 This I did for thee
37 I was a wandering sheep
38 Above the clouds
39 The Prodigal Child
40 Jesus is there
41 'Twill not be long
42 Blessed Saviour
43 Hold on
44 The Bible Song
45 At the Cross there's room
46 Happy are we
47 Jesus died for me
48 God of Glory (Evening Hymn)
49 Jesus Wept
50 God loved the world
51 Nearer my Home
52 Jesu, Lover of my Soul
53 Confidence in Jesus
54 Near the Cross
55 Jesus loves poor sinners
56 Lost one
57 Art thou weary?
58 O come to the merciful Saviour
59 Once my poor heart
60 Jesus of Nazareth passeth by
61 Come, come to Jesus
62 Our souls are in His mighty hand
63 Who'll stand up for Jesus?
64 Press on!
65 Ring the Bells of Heaven
66 See how great a flame
67 There is a better world
68 Immanuel's Land
69 We may spread our couch
70 Our gratitude
71 When quiet in my house I sit
72 Whiter than snow
73 Whosoever will
74 We are coming
75 Welcome to glory
76 The Crystal River
77 We won't give up the Bible
78 My God, my Father
79 Save me at the Cross
80 Stand up for Jesus
81 Only one way to the Cross
82 Lord, I hear of showers
83 Jesus, Friend of sinners
84 I hear the voice of Jesus
85 I hear Thy welcome voice
86 I am coming to the Cross
87 How sweet the Name
88 Holy Spirit, once again
89 I know He is mine
90 Welcome home
91 Hail to the Lord's Anointed
92 Day by day
93 The Beautiful Stream
94 The Better Land
95 We are marching through
96 Abide with me
97 Ringing through
98 The Angel's Song
99 See, amid the winter's snow
100 Hark, the herald angels
101 While shepherds watched
102 Blow, ye golden trumpets
103 Brightest and best
104 All my heart
105 A beautiful Star
106 Who is He?
107 Merry, merry Christmas
108 Christmas Songs
109 O come
110 Merry Christmas everywhere
111 Carol, sweetly carol
112 Sounding from the bell
113 In a manger
114 Christians, awake!
115 Ring the Christmas bells
116 By night
117 Sweet peace
118 Ring, ring the bells
119 O Saviour!
120 A Holy Dawn
121 Almost persuaded now to believe
122 I left it all with Jesus
123 Lead me on
124 Why unbelieving?
125 Yes, there is pardon for you
126 Joy-bells ringing
127 The Supper at Bethany
128 Our Sabbath Song
129 Christ arose
130 Jesus saves me now
131 A safe stronghold our God is still
132 One more day's work
133 The Child Samuel
134 The Sunday-School War-cry
135 King of Glory
136 What can I give to Jesus
137 The children may come
138 Hear my cry, Lord
139 Evening Hymn
140 Christmas Bells
141 A New Year's Song
142 They present Him in the Temple
143 and 144 The Beacon Light
145 and 146 Glory to God
147 The fierce wind howls
148 Saviour, for Thy love we praise Thee
149 and 150 Nothing to bring
151 and 152 He knows
153 A Child's Evening Prayer
154 Jesus and the Children
155 Loving Words
156 My High Priest
157 Another Year
158 All glory to God
159 Anniversary Hymn
160 Work for Jesus
161 Gladly will we sing
162 Ever so much to do
163 Wheat and Tares
164 The Pearl of great price
165 Temperance Song
166 Like the Snow Flakes
167 Veni Salvator
168 O, my Saviour hear me

INFANTS' SONGS.

1 God ever near
2 Jesus, gentle Saviour
3 Little Children, Come to Jesus
4 Around the Throne
5 Nursery Hymn
6 I am Jesu's Little Friend
7 Our Father
8 His Little One
9 Children's Prayer
10 Because He Loved me so
11 Jesus Loves a Little Child
12 A Happy Land
13 Suffer Little Children
14 Children of Jerusalem
15 Jesus Loves even Me
16 Joys of Heaven
17 Little Hearts and Little Minds
18 We are Little Travellers
19 We can Tell
20 I will Pray
21 Jesus, I am Coming
22 Jewels
23 Jesus is our Shepherd
24 We are Coming

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN: A Service of Song for Boys and Girls. By the Rev. E. H. SUGDEN, B.A., B.Sc.; Staff Notation, 4d.; Tonic Sol-Fa, 4d.; Words only, 1d. (50 copies half-price); All the Eleven Hymns and Tunes are original compositions, the music having had Dr. BRIDGE's supervision. The Readings are from Holy Scripture. The Service has already been given in St. George's Hall, Bradford, &c., and is pronounced to be very good.

THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE: A Service of Sacred Song. By C. MANSFORD, B.A., and R. DUNSTAN, Mus. Bac., Cantab. Staff Notation, only, 4d. (50 copies, half-price.) An admirably arranged Selection of Twenty Old Methodist Hymns and Tunes.

The Promised Land: A Service of Praise. By T. AUSTIN. Specially adapted for Sunday-School Festivals and Anniversaries. Staff Notation, 6d.; Tonic Sol-fa, 4d.; Words only, 1d. (50 at half-price.)

"The Tunes are well selected, and among the composers may be mentioned Barnby, Turpin, and H. Smart. These names speak for themselves. A capitally arranged pianoforte accompaniment (real) is added. The connective readings are well chosen, and the whole effect is very good."—*Schoolmaster.*

The Infant Saviour: A Service of Song. By Dr. STEPHENSON. 4d.

The Wilderness Life: A Service of Song. By Dr. STEPHENSON. 4d.

Daniel Quorm: A Service of Song. By S. DARKE. 4d.

Frankey Vivian: A Service of Song. By J. BURNHAM. 4d.

Simon Jasper: A Service of Song. By J. BURNHAM. 4d.

☞ *All the above, 50 copies half-price, and the following as far as stock will permit:—*

The Man Christ Jesus: A Service of Song. 2d. (50 copies half-price).

THERE DWELT IN OLD JUDEA: A Christmas Carol. By J. P. HARDING. 2d.

TE DEUM IN E FLAT. By J. P. HARDING. 3d.

JUBILATE DEO IN E FLAT. By J. P. HARDING. 1½d.

Morning Service in D. By C. J. DALE. 4d. (50 copies half-price.) Full Organ Score, 1s.

Suffer Little Children: An Anthem in G. By C. J. DALE. 2d. (50 copies half-price.)

Remember now thy Creator: An Anthem in F. By JOSIAH BOOTH. 2d. (50 copies half-price.)

The Child Jesus: Readings and Illuminated Texts, Cartoons by Gunston, Songs and Music by Rev. Mark Guy Pearse and others, 1s.

LIFE OF JESUS (Readings in Holy Scripture). New Edition, Uniform in Size, Price, &c., with **Christian Doctrine (First Readings)** and **Precept and Parable (Words of Our Lord). 2d.**; per 100, **16s.**

These Works are intended as Manuals of Instruction, and have been described as "Admirably adapted for the Home, the Sunday School, and Religious Instruction in Day Schools."—"Large print, linen covers," &c. The following are intended for use in Collective Teaching, either preparatory to, or accompanying, the use of the Manuals:—

Life of Jesus: Large Type Edition.—A Lesson, or Lessons, complete on each page; 23 in. by 18 in. Each sheet, **3d.**; Set of 16 sheets, **3s.**; Ditto on one roller, **5s.** Mounted on Cardboard, each, **8d.**; set of 16 boards, **10s.**—and

Illustrated Readings: Life of Jesus.—Cartoons in Sepia on a Blue Ground. Readings in Bold Type. Size 36 in. by 27 in.

Prices.	*Unmounted.*	*Mounted like a Map.*	*On One Roller*
On Paper ...	**1s.** each. Set of 22, **£1.**	**1s. 8d.** each. Set of 22, **£1 13 4**	**£1 6 8**
On Cloth ...	**2s.** each. Set of 22, **£2.**	**2s. 8d.** each. Set of 22, **£2 13 4**	**£2 2 0**

Numbers and Titles of Illustrated Readings and Bible Cartoons:—

1 A Saviour, Christ the Lord
2 They present Him to the Lord
3 Wise men come to worship Him
4 Herod seeks to destroy Him
5 They found Him in the Temple
6 The Carpenter of Nazareth
7 This is My beloved Son
8 Angels ministered unto Him
9 He purges His Father's House
10 He heals the sick
11 He raises the dead to life
12 He feeds the multitud
13 He walks on the sea
14 He blesses little children
15 Hosanna to the Son of David
16 Betrayed by Judas
17 Condemned by the Council
18 Delivered up by Pilate
19 Led away to be crucified
20 Crucified, dead, and buried
21 He rose again from the dead
22 He ascended into heaven

Bible Cartoon only (*Gold or Blue Ground*)—THE LAST SUPPER.

Bible Cartoons: Life of Jesus.—Printed in Sepia on a Gold Ground: Nos. 1 to 22 (27 in. by 23 in.), each **1s.** The Last Supper (35 in. by 25 in.), **2s.**, (or in Outline only, **1s. 4d.**); The Set of Twenty-three Cartoons in a Box, **£1 1s.**; Ditto, together with set of Acts of Apostles, and two Daniel Cartoons (*see below*), Mounted on Cloth, and bound as an Album, **£2 12s. 6d.** Mounted on Strainers and Varnished:—Nos. 1 to 22, each at **3s. 4d.**; The Last Supper, **5s.**; The Set of Twenty-three, **£3 3s.**

Also, to order, Framed, at the following net prices, carriage paid by purchaser:

In Black and Gold Frame, Nos. 1 to 22, each **5s.**; The Last Supper, **7s.**; The Set of Twenty-three Cartoons, **£5 5s.**; Ditto, with Atlas Mount, Nos. 1 to 22, each **8s.**; The Last Supper, **10s.**; The Set of Twenty-three Cartoons, **£8 8s.**

Miniature Cartoons: Life of Jesus.—New Edition, Revised and extended, with Titles and Texts. Twenty-five Cards in Gold and Colour. Set of Twenty-five, **1s. 4d.**; also sold at **1d.**; or per dozen, **8d.**

Acts of the Apostles Cartoons.—Printed in Tints. Size 30 in. by 22 in., each **8d.** Set of Six, **3s. 6d.** On Strainers, varnished, **3s. 4d.** Set of Six, **18s.**

Book of Daniel Cartoons.—Highly finished Chromos, 36 in. by 20 in. No. 1, The Four Wise Children; No. 2, Walking in the Midst of the Fire, **2s. 6d.** each; the two, **4s.** On Strainer, varnished, **5s.** each; the two, **8s.**

Also, to order, Framed, at the following net prices, carriage paid by purchaser:

In Black and Gold Frames, **6s.**; the two, **11s.**; Ditto, Atlas Mounts, **9s.**; the two, **17s.**; Gold Frame and Black Mount, **12s. 6d.**; the two, **24s.**

The above Readings and Cartoons formed a prominent feature of the Exhibit for which Mr. C. TERRY, the Printer, received a Bronze Medal at the International Health Exhibition.

WALL TEXTS (LESSON TEXTS).

Size 30in. by 20in., toned paper, bold type and bright colours.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Any Single Text	0	0	2	Set of Fifty-three Texts	0	7	6
Any Thirteen Texts	0	2	0	Ditto in a Volume, Half-bound...	0	16	0

Mounted on Cloth and varnished.

Any Single Text, **9d.** | Any Two Texts on One Sheet, **2s.** | Any Three Texts on One Sheet, **3s.**

1. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him.—Psalm cxlvii. 11.
2. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh; . . . and the barrel of meal wasted not neither did the cruse of oil fail.—1 Kings xvii. 6, 16.
3. Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.—Ephesians vi. 1.
4. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise.—Eph. vi. 2.
5. God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.—John iii. 16.
6. He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives.—Luke iv. 18.
7. My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.—2 Kings ii. 12.
8. Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God.—Leviticus xix. 32.
9. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed Him.—Lu. v. 11
10. He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.—Matthew x. 40.
11. How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?—2 Kings v. 13.
12. And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.—Luke x. 37.
13. And, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.—2 Kings vi. 17
14. And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life.—John vi. 35.
15. But rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.—Luke x. 20.
16. Thou wilt show me the path of life.—Ps. xvi. 11.
17. Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life.—John xi. 25.
18. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. –Luke xi. 9.
19. Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.—Luke xi. 28.
20. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.—Proverbs xxvii. 10.
21. When pride cometh, then cometh shame; but with the lowly is wisdom.—Proverbs xi. 2.
22. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.—Matthew vi. 33.
23. If ye love Me, keep My commandments.—John xiv. 15.
24. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole world is full of His glory.—Isa. vi. 3.
25. Salvation is of the Lord.—Jonah ii. 9.
26. And all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.—Luke xiii. 17.
27. Strive to enter in at the strait gate.—Lu. xiii. 24.
28. How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!—Psalm lxxxiv. 1.
29. No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Matthew vi. 24.
30. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.—Luke xv. 7. 10.
31. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.—Psalm xxxiv. 6.
32. The path of the just is as the shining light.—Proverbs iv. 18.
33. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.—Proverbs iv. 23.
34. While he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father.—2 Chronicles xxxiv. 3.
35. Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.—Luke xviii. 16.
36. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.—Daniel i. 8.
37. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke xviii. 14.
38. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.—Luke xix. 10.
39. Walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt.—Daniel iii. 25.
40. Jesus answered him, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.—John xiii. 8.
41. The integrity of the upright shall guide them. —Proverbs xi. 3.
42. Because he believed in his God.—Daniel vi. 23.
43. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.—John xxi. 17.
44. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.—Psalm cxxvii. 1.
45. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.—John i. 29.
46. And the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand.—Esther v. 2.
47. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?—Psalm xxvii. 1.
48. Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.—1 Peter ii. 24.
49. The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him.—Ezra viii. 22.
50. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him. –Luke xxiv. 31.
51. And they said, Let us rise up and build.—Nehemiah ii. 18.
52. Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. —Luke ii. 10.
53. For the joy of the Lord is your strength.—Nehemiah viii. 10.

BANNER TEXTS.

With gilt roller and ends.

On Cloth, gold letters on a rich flock ground, 34in. by 22in.

5s. *each.*

"Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia."
"By grace ye are saved."
"Christ is risen indeed."
"Emmanuel—God with us."
"Feed My lambs."
"Glory to God in the highest."
"God is love."
"God sent forth His Son."
"Goodwill towards men."
"Holy, Holy, Holy."
"I am the True Vine."
"I am the Bread of Life."
"King of Kings."
"Lord of Lords."
"Looking unto Jesus."
"Purify your hearts by faith."
"Remember now Thy Creator"
"Rejoice in the Lord."
"On earth peace."
"Stand perfect in the will of God."
"Stablish your hearts in holiness."
"Suffer little children to come unto Me."
"The Lord will provide."
"Thou shalt call His name Jesus."
"The Lord giveth wisdom."
"Watch and pray."

PASSION FLOWER BANNERS.

"God with us."
"He is risen."
"Glory to God in the highest."
"Holy, Holy, Holy."
"On earth peace."
"Goodwill towards men."

LILY BANNERS.

"Alleluia."
"Emmanuel."
"He is risen."
"God is love."
"God with us."

BANNER TEXTS—LARGE SIZE.

"Let us not be weary in well-doing." | "We shall reap if we faint not."

Other Texts of suitable length can be put in these Banners to order.

On Morocco Cloth. Size, 27in. by 56in.

Background, pale tint: flowers, hand-painted. Borders in gold and rich flock.

21s. *each net. The Pair,* **37s. 6d.** *net.*

RIBBON TEXTS.

(34in. by 24in.)

On Cloth, white letters on a flock ground, with gilt bordering.

4s. *each.*

"Blessed are the pure in heart."
"Behold the Lamb of God."
"That taketh away the sins of the world."
"Feed My Lambs."
"Faith, Hope, Charity."
"God is Love."
"I am the Bread of Life."
"I am the Light of the World."
"I am the True Vine."
"Come unto Me . . I will give you rest."
"I am meek and lowly in heart."
"My yoke is easy; My burden is light."
"Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me."
"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."
"Watch and Pray."

SHIELD TEXTS.

On Cloth (margin to cut off), 20in. by 25in.

White letters on a flock ground. Border in gold and colour.

3s. 6d. *each.*

"Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia."
"By Grace ye are Saved."
"Christ is risen indeed."
"Emmanuel—God with us."
"Feed my Lambs."
"Glory to God in the highest."
"God is Love."
"God sent forth His Son."
"I am the True Vine."
"I am the Bread of Life."
"Looking unto Jesus."
"The Lord giveth Wisdom."
"Thou shalt call His name Jesus."
"Watch and pray."

SCROLL TEXTS.

On Cloth (margin to cut off), 36in. by 12in.

Gold and colours, rich red flock background.

1s. 6d. *each.*

"Alleluia."
"Cease to do evil."
"Do good unto all."
"Emmanuel."
"Feed My Lambs."
"God is Love."
"God with us."
"He is risen."
"I am the Bread of Life."
"Looking unto Jesus."
"Learn to do well."
"Pray without ceasing."
"Rejoice in the Lord."
"Search the Scriptures."
"The Prince of Peace."
"Thou God seest me."
"Thy will be done."
"Watch and pray."
"I am the True Vine."
"King of Kings."
"Lord of Lords."

SCROLL TEXTS—LARGE SIZE.

On Cloth (margin to cut off) 7ft. by 12in. White letters on a flock ground, with border, **5s.** each.

"Be thou faithful unto death."
"Bear ye one another's burden."
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."
"Be ye therefore sober, watch unto prayer."
"Fight the good fight of faith."
"I am the good Shepherd."
"I will give thee a crown of life."
"Jesus is the Son of God."
"Lay hold of eternal life."
"My house is the house of prayer."
"Put on the whole armour of God."
"Quit you like men."
"Remember now thy Creator."
"Remember the Sabbath Day."
"Speak not evil of one another."
"Stand fast in the faith."
"Suffer little children to come unto Me."
"They forsook all and followed Him."
"Thy word is truth."
"The Lord giveth Wisdom."
"Watch ye . . Be strong."
"Welcome to our Anniversary."

The School-Room Placard, No. 1. "It is expected of the Scholars in this School that they be Regular, Punctual, Obedient, Attentive, Careful, and Kind," &c. 40in. by 30in., **8d.**; On Cloth and Rollers, and Varnished, **2s.**

School Portfolio, to hold Cartoons, Texts, Prints, &c. 16s.

The following will be supplied as far as the surplus stock will permit:—

House of Prayer. Suitable Texts, &c., for Hanging in Places of Worship. Two Colours, on Toned Paper, **2d.**; Mounted on Cloth and Rollers, and Varnished, **1s.** *net.*

PAPERS ON SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING: I. The Character of the Work. II. Qualifications Desirable in the Workers. By JOHN HEWITT TOMLIN. Each, **2d.**; per 100, **16s.**

The following Papers on "Our Sunday Schools: their Objects and Methods," will be supplied at reduced prices as far as the stock will permit:—

I.—*Our Children and their Teachers.*—REV. W. O. SIMPSON.
II.—*The Necessity and Methods of Doctrinal Teaching.*—REV. G. W. OLVER, B.A.
III.—*The Teacher in Preparation.*—REV. W. T. DAVISON, M.A.
IV.—*How are we to Retain our Elder Scholars?*—MR. E. B. DINGLEY.
V.—*The Sunday School Infant Class.*—MR. J. BAILEY.
VI.—*The School in relation to the Church and Former Scholars.*—REV. C. H. KELLY.
VII.—*The Black-Board in the Sunday School.*—MR. W. AVER DUNCAN.
VIII. *How best to Secure Co-operation of Parents.*—REV. W. GIBSON, B.A. / *School Architecture.*—REV. RICHARD GREEN.
IX.—*Temperance and Bands of Hope.*—REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.
X. *The Sources of the Teacher's Power.*—MR. FOUNTAIN J. HARTLEY. / *The Necessity of great Love and wide Sympathy.*—MR. RICHARD JOHNSON. / *Sunday School Unions, etc.*—ALDERMAN SIR WM. M'ARTHUR, K.C.M.G., M.P.

½d. *net*; per dozen (or, the Set of Ten), **4d.** *net.*

SALVATION IN EVERY HOUSE: A Letter to Sunday Scholars and Young People. By the Rev. CHARLES H. KELLY. 105th thousand. **1d.**; per doz., **8d.**; per 100, **4s.**

THE CHILDREN'S SUNDAY (Third Sunday in October). By the Rev. BENJAMIN HELLIER; 53rd thousand. **1d.**; per doz., **8d.**; per 100, **4s.**

☞ *The following will be supplied as far as the surplus stock will permit:—*

Prayer Before Reading the Scriptures.—To place inside cover of Bible. 4¾ by 3 in. per doz., **1d.**; per 100, **4d.** *net.*

Prayer Form: "Monday, Pray for ....," &c., per doz. **1d.**; per 100, **4d.** *net.*

WESLEYAN METHODIST SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAGAZINE. A
Teacher's Hand-book and the Organ of the Union. 48 pp., Monthly, **2d.**

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.—Illustrated. 8 pp., Monthly, ½**d.** Volumes, **1s.**

SENIOR SCHOLAR'S TABLET. | **JUNIOR SCHOLAR'S TABLET.**
Illustrated. For every Sunday. Illustrated.

Packets :—20, **1d.**; 100, **5d.**; 12 for each Sunday in the Month (Jany., &c.) **3d.**
Books—Quarter (Jan. to March, &c), **1d.** Annual, **3d.** Answers to Home Questions, **1d**
"These neat little books are brimful of good matter for every Sunday throughout the year. The arrangements are highly to be commended."—*The Practical Teacher.*

LIST OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS for Schools, &c. Annual, per doz., **4d.** per 100, **2s. 8d.**

REPORTS OF THE UNION (Annual) Connexional, 4s. District, 6d

LISTS, CATALOGUES, &c.

(*On Application to* Mr. Binns, *Assistant Secretary.*)

A Statement of the Advantages of the Union, and Terms o
Subscription.

A List of Bindings and Prices of the Methodist Sunday-Schoo
Hymn and Tune-Books, with Specimen Pages.

A List of Bindings and Prices of the Methodist Sunday-Schoo
Registers and Records, with Specimen Pages.

A List of Illustrated Publications and other Appliances for
Christian Instruction. Adapted for Schools, Nurseries, and Missions.

A Catalogue of Books published at the Wesleyan Conference Office

A Catalogue of Religious Tracts published at the Wesleyan Conference Office.

A List of Bindings and Prices, with Specimen Pages, of Wesley's
Hymns and New Supplement, Bibles, and the Methodist Sunday-School Hymn-Book.

Sunday-School Furniture. The Illustrated Price Lists, &c., of the Best Makers.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

The Union supplies, at Ordinary Discounts, to Schools and Subscribers, **Harmoniums, American Organs** *and* **Pianofortes,** *by the best makers, English and Foreign. Illustrated Price Lists may be obtained on application; and Selections from a large and varied Assortment can be made by appointment with* Mr. Binns, *Assistant Secretary.*